





# ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE APOCALYPSE





# ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE APOCALYPSE

An Interpretation of  
"The Book of the Revelation"  
in relation to the Archaeology, Folklore,  
and Religious Literature and Ritual  
of the Near East

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WITH  
ADMIRATION



## PREFACE

THE *Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* is the most difficult writing in the New Testament. No plainer proof of this is needed than the fact that most often it has been artificially sequestered so as to yield strange chronology and stranger sense, by the ignorant and the wise. The long history of its interpretation seems to demonstrate that the majority has desired it to be only a semi-magical writing. My book tries to put it back into the atmosphere in which it was meant to be read. This has been done by minute study of manuscripts and versions. To this was linked a fresh realisation of the natural fact that what it had to say is part of the Christian message of the first century. These activities were joined with a new investigation of the origins of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic; and thence the whole quest was taken into the wider air of Anthropology. Each phase of work has brought new discoveries which illuminate the writer's ways with the revelation of his Lord. Even the "Scarlet Woman" changes her colour and has no more to do with Rome. That is among the least of the new things which most patient study of this *Book* yields.

Of these things, whether big or little, it should be understood that they are attested by other findings and work which will appear in their own order

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and place. *The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* can no longer be a writing which produces novelties by equating the phenomena of history with some of its more curiously wrought imagery, nor one which is content to be of the sort that is put on a shelf by the side of the *Book of the Mormon*. A brilliant disciple in the first century wrote the *Book* with a title which, if it were meant to carry meaning to its readers, sets forth what and whom we in these days most of all desire to know about : Jesus Christ the Revealer.

V. B.

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## SECTION I

THE NEW APPROACH TO THE GREAT  
FIGURE AND 'DAY' OF THE BOOK



# I

## THE NEW APPROACH TO THE GREAT FIGURE AND 'DAY' OF THE BOOK

IT was a long while before anthropology was allowed any right-of-way in the study of non-biblical literature. It has knocked a much longer time on the latched door of the Bible. We have tardily granted some part of its right. The writers of commentaries have made use of archaeology ; though in a manner to serve the makers of theological systems. A citadel has to be kept. Archaeology has often then had to render pressed service. That most nimble member of the larger science, the History of Religions, has been given more liberty. It is to be feared that commentators have not understood with what gay and swift feet this branch of anthropological study can move. The results of this insensitiveness are sometimes amazing. A Palestinian text is wrapped in an iridescent web of what are called literary parallels. When it is read in their light, if the text is from the Old Testament the writer is found in the end to be stammering in an Indian dialect of the West ; or if it be a New Testament text its writer is pattering in terms of an obscure Near Eastern sect whose books have recently been discovered. There is not even the sense of a citadel to be kept here. Indeed it may

be asked what sense at all is there in many of these displays which lead to some such results as have been described. Commentaries should have neither thoughts of doctrinal defence nor appetites which can be led astray by a branch of learning with gaiety of step. They are meant to be servants of Truth. Therefore the instinct which has led them to dip into archaeology and to raid the religious literatures of the world should go on to become the intelligence which handles the whole science of anthropology.

There is nothing that is needed so much as this, both in the understanding of the material which goes to compose a true theology and for the correction of the strange nightmares which anthropologists incline to make of Christianity. Thus no argument is called for to show that the use of anthropology in the study of the Bible does not mean the intrusion of an anachronous agent or of a foreign tincture whose use might lend its exegetical treatment an up-to-date air. Man and anthropology began together. We then ought not to annex the findings of this science in the same frivolous spirit as we have done with the social sciences. Unlawful unions of ideas between philosophies, most conscious of their own social claims, have been made with a Christian message which had not yet stayed to enquire what Jesus had actually said about men. It has been easier to disguise Him as Leo Tolstoy or Richard Owen or even Jean Jacques Rousseau. Can anyone imagine what clamour might be raised by tricking Him out in the clothes of the most devout of anthropologists?

The area of investigation is marked out by my subject: the origins and development of Jewish apocalyptic, and especially as these have found perfection of shape in the *Apocalypse*. In shorter phrase, the subject is *written* apocalyptic. There is of course another area which lies behind this one. A primary area where men began to speak the stuff of apocalypses under the spell of the earliest forms of Semitic cult. That will not now be explored. We are to work in the historic period and upon its written material. Upon its Folk-features when under the control of pre-synagogal and synagogal ritual. To study the technique of apocalyptic: how its ideas and movement arose—an undramatic drama, as to form, which surpasses all other types of drama by its essential hold on the mind. To disclose the plastic source of apocalyptic imagery; and thus to see how and when people, who are said to have done nothing in art which could be looked at, draw inspiration to fashion such awesome images as invested their own and the mind of the West throughout the centuries. And then to ascertain how Christian apocalyptists took the great Tradition and its technique and gave them new forms. These are the chief tasks to be done within our area. It will be clear at once that neither of them can be undertaken without the aid of anthropology.

A glance over near walls of literary study will also thrust that opinion upon us. No one can be unconscious today of the difference made to the study of saga forms since the admission of the

claims of that service. From a conception of unique inspiration they have been brought into vital union with a nation's age-long telling of its own fears and hopes and spiritual wealth. The greater things of Greek and Scandinavian literature, for example, have become new for us. They have awakened to their own meaning. This was not done by rendering them into the terms of certain anthropological formulae which were lively because a twentieth-century scholar had invented them. Great books do not so take again their true vitality. The reason was that authorities had come to understand the Aristotelian idea of *mimesis*<sup>1</sup>—a fine piece of anthropological intuition on the part of the famous Greek. It is now an exquisite instrument for the use of other scholars when examining other ancient literatures. We have not yet used it upon the great achievement of Semitic genius. These books are almost where the great things of the Mediterranean and Northern peoples were about fifty years ago. Yet it cannot be denied that there are no expressions of national genius, like Jewish apocalyptic and the *Apocalypse*, which are so much the natural objects of anthropological study. The chief reasons why they have not become such have already been hinted at. To them we may add two considerations from the most important and recent contributions, in German and English and Dutch, to the study of our subject—that is, for instance, in books by Bousset,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, I. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Zur Textkritik des Apokalypse* (1894); *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (1906).

Weyland,<sup>1</sup> Charles,<sup>2</sup> and Lohmeyer.<sup>3</sup> These authoritative writings exhibit, first, a large misunderstanding of Jewish apocalyptic; and second, a larger misunderstanding of what Christian apocalyptists did with Jewish apocalyptic. Archaeology and the History of Religions have their part in those books. The writers' erudition ensured that. It must be said, however, that anthropology was not allowed its rights either with the subject of Jewish apocalyptic or with the most perfect of apocalypses. Until that is done neither can be understood.

Now it is valuable to study the text of each of the apocalypses. That gives them literary status. It is more valuable to treat them as members of an ancient Tradition. That gives them anthropological status. A man composes the first. A people always creates the second. When we require exact definition of the first we must always come to the second for that. We shall find that apocalyptic takes on a saga form. There were then two chief sorts of saga form—the historical and the apocalyptical. What is the difference between them? The historical is an earthly drama with unearthly origins: myth or ritual or a god's or a human's doings in a ritual context. The apocalyptical has also the same origins, but it is told with a developing

<sup>1</sup> *Omwerkings, en Compilatie—Hypothesen toegepast op de Apocalypse van Johannes* (1908). Another representative piece of Dutch work is Baljon, *De Openbaring van Johannes* (1908).

<sup>2</sup> *The Revelation of St. John* (1920) = *Comm.*; *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (1922) = *Lectures*.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (1926).

ethereal over-play. The historical is born in a person or persons, and ends in his or their death or dazzling deed. The apocalyptical too is born in a 'person', but ends with making as ethereally timeless as can be the features of cult whence he and it sprang. The historical ends on the earth. History overcomes ritual. The apocalyptical is looking forward, from festival to festival, to *the Man* and the establishment in perfection of the cosmic ideas which made him such and created his original context of ritual. It translates them to the sky; not as an other-worldly or ghostly version of them but as a super-worldly appearance of them. Each is as real as the other. When the capable apocalypst arises, he brings the two together on the earth. The upwellings of a people's memory wholly creates the historical form. They but partly fashion the apocalyptical form. The recasting of primitive religion causes the development of the apocalyptical and dimly contributes to the historical saga form. These conclusions bring us to the fringe of Christian apocalyptic. Therein we have to do with a fresh creative factor—namely the Christian revelation. Its alchemy constitutes the cardinal problem of the *Apocalypse*.

Anthropology has everything to work upon if those conclusions are true ones. The ordinary way with apocalypses is to reduce them to utopias. The science of man could have little or no dealings with them, if they are merely wisps of dream caught together with threads of philosophy or theology. An author can write such a book without any refer-



ence to the fact that he is one with a people who have enthroned an immemorial tradition. Jewish apocalyptic did not produce that sort of writer or writings. But there have been influences at work which made both look as if they were its products. A characteristic of apocalypses, for example, is a number of names for the one about whom they centre. Among them is the well-known title 'Son of Man'. If then a little of the theological notion of a Messiah be injected into that name, there spreads throughout the text of the book containing it a sense of unreality. Little or nothing of it could ever be on land or sea. A basis in history or a network of links with an actual and national saga could not be thought of either with book or Jewish apocalyptic. A little consideration will convince us that this unreality pervades our handling of both phases of this matter. Apocalyptic is enslaved to a logic both foreign and late; and apocalypses are books for the schools. *The Man* has become a doctrine. His context is metaphor to be made into details of theological statement. It all seems easy and right. The sanctions of long practice ensure these impressions. And at this point a thoughtful advocate of this way with apocalypses might ask: is not talk of apocalyptic and saga forms another way of making metaphor of the whole? It would be if there was not a large body of evidence for an actual Semitic saga of *the Man*. This has been gathered, for example, from ancient Hebrew, Phoenician, Syriac, and Samaritan documents. Collateral support has been found in early Arabic

sources. This saga can be shown to be behind the whole of the Old Testament. It is not only a primary creator of recorded apocalyptic ; it is also the apocalyptical inspiration of the Semitic Folk-mind and of the related Folk-ritual. *The Man* will be shown to be an historic person with an historic succession, each known as his son. These things belong to an area behind the one we are investigating. They are here summed up that we may be sure of our ground along two main lines : (1) that what has gone to make up Jewish apocalypses has its basis in history ; and (2) that the label ' apocalyptical saga ' means what it says, because both Jewish apocalyptic and apocalypses are vitally inspired by the Semitic saga of *the Man*. Some of the evidence for these positions will appear as we go on. For the moment we are making the subject right for anthropological treatment. It is not enough to think of ' the Day ' and ' the coming One ' as being hidden with the primary emotions of mankind. Nor to say that no one has yet traced how far these go back in the history of man's religious and social deeds. Both may go back to the dawn of history. Both are with us to this day in the classical theologies and the changing democratic philosophies—in Karl Adam, or Karl Barth, or Karl Marx. What is in the very fibre of our nervous systems offers a subject for urgent study. The approach to it is not a pathological one, but an anthropological one. And this through the *corpus* of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic.

For the purposes of our analysis it is excellent

to have the most perfect of apocalypses to work upon. The *Apocalypse* is not primarily this because it is the climax in style of an age of literary effort. Nor, as we shall see, because it has rid apocalyptic of all suggestions of imagery from and company with primitive material and sources. Heir of the great Tradition, the *Apocalypse* has given the fullest expression to its many phases of inspiration. In this way it is the perfect apocalypse. It has also other sound claims to its place in the New Testament. These will be developed as we progress with our subject. Interest now must be centred upon what Jewish apocalyptic is interested in: its primary imagery and material of sources. Those are most familiar sorts of phrases to the scholar who deals with texts. We must help them to become docile to anthropology. Let us then begin with that designation which is the most familiar of all—the word ‘sources’. A student of the Greek text of the *Apocalypse*, or of the commentaries upon the book, knows that this word means marginal constellations of references from the whole range of biblical and extra-biblical literature. What is accomplished by such stellar assiduity? The commentator claims that the writer’s ‘sources’ have been discovered. He has done nothing of the kind. He has left the question untouched: what has this writer to do with the apocalyptical Tradition? Anthropology knows that therein are the ‘sources’ of the *Apocalypse*.

Again, there are few words more at home on the textual expert’s lips than ‘material’, and especially

when such an adjective as 'primary' precedes it. We anatomise writings, and assess a writer as if he were a problem in palaeontology. An American scholar has lately done this for the *Apocalypse*.<sup>1</sup> He tells us that the book "scintillates with Old Testament citations and allusions". Its writer is a worker in literary mosaic. To the poet, imagined by that delightful poetess Miss Christina Rossetti in her book *The Face of the Deep*, he adds the masterful artificer who handles "his Bible, the Classics of his race and religion" as Bunyan the English Bible or Swinburne the Greek Classics. An exacting judgement will wonder at his two parallels. Then he goes on to insist that the writer's art of mosaic is most subtle. He knows the Bible in the original languages. And therefore can be at times "an original and masterful exegete". For instance, the title for Jesus of 'Amen' in iii. 14 is related by him with the title which follows 'the Beginning of the creation of God'—that is one from Proverbs viii. 22, which is claimed by him as freely following the Septuagint version. To bring these two titles together in a Sapiential source, this critic turns to the Hebrew of the close of verse 30 in the same eighth chapter of Proverbs: "I became beside him *âmôn*". The next step for the writer of the *Apocalypse* is to follow the way of the Rabbis, as he claims it to have been, and to vocalise the important Hebrew term as he pleases. *Amôn* becomes *Amen*. It is then made into another name

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery, *The Education of the Seer of the Apocalypse*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1926), 71 ff.

for Wisdom, and so becomes one for Jesus Christ. That this name is a problem all students know. It is suggested, however, that this way with it manifests that the writer's view of John as a worker in mosaics has gathered too strong impetus in his mind. His picture of the writer of the *Apocalypse* has yet to be rounded off. This is done by making him conversant with all the early Greek versions of the Old Testament. It is concluded too that he will use only the most unusual of them, such as the one that is catalogued by Field as being by 'the Hebrew'. The painter of this picture has brushed it in with strokes almost as firm as the Swedish portrait painter Anders Zorn. The results are different: We knew the subject when the Swede had finished; we do not know John when the American has limned in his theory. In so doing he has used the word 'sources' as equal to the word 'material'. But he could not write the description 'primary' before it. He might accompany his use of the word 'material' with the term 'contemporary'. For him the *Apocalypse* is a much cleverer literary feat than an epic poem. The only answer which can be given, to this portrait painted according to a theory of literary workmanship, is that such an apocalyptist is too grown-up to have written the *Apocalypse* or any other book of the sort. He is quite apart from the Semitic Tradition. He could not use the veritable material of apocalyptic. Yet the *Apocalypse* declares on every page that John used traditional, or primary material, with remarkable mastery. It is his power

over that which gives him distinction among others. He is not a solitary genius: a poetic Melchizedek. We shall find that he uses the actual material of apocalypses in the ancient manner, though to it he adds a new lustre. There is then the need to discover what that material was.

Before we come to that duty, we ought to glance in this prefatory way at two other familiar words. They are 'structure' and 'imagery'. From Vischer<sup>1</sup> to Charles the controversy has raged whether the *Apocalypse* was of many parts or a single document. Meanwhile Oman<sup>2</sup> has thought that the accepted text was an untidy one. Its repetitions and the like needed judicious pruning. But a dainty tidiness, or such an ordered condition as proposed by this masculine thinker, would have marked the book as being something other than it is. What then of Charles' rather heavy-toned claims to have established the unity of the book? He has not gone beyond making out a linguistic unity. That is valuable if true. The manner of his demonstration, however, demands a writer who is much more of a genius than Montgomery's poet. He is more learned. His subtlety of intention, as a worker in literary mosaic, is raised to a degree that Proba and the school of Italian centonists,<sup>3</sup> for instance, could never have attained. Now if we may not make an apocalypse over-tidy, or we lose

<sup>1</sup> *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (1886.)

<sup>2</sup> *Book of Revelation: A Theory of the Text* (1923); *Text of Revelation: A Revised Theory* (1928).

<sup>3</sup> Schenkl, ed. *Poetae Christiani Minores* (1888: C.S.E.L. xvi); Ermini, *Il Centone di Proba e la poesia centonadia latina* (1909).

its air of dream ; still less may we make its structure depend on a recondite dovetailing of multitudinous material whose cement is " a Semitic philosophy of history and religion "—so that the book is the complete reflection of what, according to Charles, is the great idea of apocalyptic : namely, " that all history, human, cosmological, and spiritual, is a unity ; a unity following naturally as a corollary of the unity of God preached by the prophets ".<sup>1</sup> The outer or linguistic unity is due to one of John's disciples : the inner or structural unity is due to his master. In what does this most numerous stuff of structural unity consist ? First, of course, of what are claimed to be biblical excerpts. Then of apocalyptical imagery. It has been suggested already that this facile description of the first sort ignores the Tradition of Jewish apocalyptic.

That of the second sort does not set itself to ask whence had Daniel and Ezekiel, for example, the same kind of imagery. It is unconscious of a special plastic source for the imagery of the Tradition. We cannot talk, therefore, of structure until we know from what well of inspiration this apocalypticist, like all of his fellow apocalypticists, had drawn ; or what had stirred the Semitic mind, through the ages, unto such apocalyptical embodiments. Moreover, it is to be doubted most earnestly that Jewish apocalyptic was an intellectual effort which doubled in the realm of history what the prophets had achieved in the realm of theology. Charles uses mathematical language of these matters.

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Comm.* ii. 144.

One is the corollary to the demonstration of the other. That makes both things which did not happen in the experience of Palestinian folk. It also construes the action of the divine in a style to move neither Jewish nor Christian apocalyptist. They can know only the automatisms which apocalyptic imposes. The logical moves of late theologies are naturally unknown to them. Thus the familiar words 'structure' and 'imagery', when used of apocalypses, can find their true meanings only as we truly comprehend the genius of written Jewish apocalyptic. In this they are like the other words we have considered. They have to be put back into the Semitic Folk-mind.

The *Apocalypse* offers us open help at once for the understanding of the elementary material of apocalyptic. There is no call to set up a learned contrast between historical and apocalyptical saga forms. The first primarily demands the Person and his Event with the power of word-rhythm. The second calls for the Person and his peoples' ritual with the power of time-rhythm. The elementary material of written apocalyptical saga is, then, the time-rhythm ; which is in contrast with that of the historical saga, for it is the word-rhythm. A poet, who is also an authority on Manilius, discoursed recently on *The Name and Nature of Poetry*.<sup>1</sup> He had it in him to write historical saga with his fine directness and lucidity ; with his exquisite ear which could put simple metrical patterns to supernal service. He said : " I think that to transfuse

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Housman (1933), 12.



emotion — not to transmit thought but to set up in the reader's sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer—is the peculiar function of poetry". That certainly is the function of historical saga. We listen or read: we glow with or find peace in the Past. What was the function of Semitic saga? It was to transfuse emotion, to set up in the listeners' or readers' senses temporal vibrations felt by the apocalypticist. They listened or read: they trembled with or went out upon *a* Future. Not the Future; that has to do with conjectured history. But *a* Future; that has to do with religion and the emotions of a great ritual hour. We have flattened time-rhythms into a dialect for makers of calendars. Instead they were meant to thrill an apocalypse with dual emotion: that of a festival and that of a responsive participant. Born of one event, each answered to each. All that metre could do in historical saga is done by these beats between symbol and symbol, between apocalyptic incident and incident. A hundred years went by as one great image billowed into another. The traditional multiples and fractions of the centuries rose and fell with vibratory life from what went to make up the festival. It created the time-rhythms and the worshipper was played upon by them. Year after year, we cannot calculate how many, the rites were repeated and their steps set deeper in mind and nerve. From early ritual to the elaborated series of festivals in the Jewish year, the people had been schooled to dream and hope within a context which concerned the life, the food of body and

spirit, of a Palestinian world. Where body and spirit are brought to the tiptoe of desire, there the time-rhythms hold sway. We moderns have so treated the Jewish festivals that they no more touch us than a ritual incident in Cretan religion. This was not how some of the festivals affected the writer of the *Apocalypse*.

"I was in the spirit", he said, "on the rubrical" or "dominical day" (i. 10). It is best to render his words in some such fashion, for they have still to be sundered from the British phrase 'The Lord's Day', and Charles' curved alternative "the day consecrated to the Lord".<sup>1</sup> It was a Jewish term before it left the apocalypticist's pen, and was almost a Jewish one when written by him. From the first to the twenty-second chapter, it will be shown that the *Apocalypse* was inspired from and conceived within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. Further, that John draws from the Tradition of Jewish apocalyptic which was fashioned by the Festivals, whence his predecessors drew. Therefore, it is suggested, this verse ought to be recognised as the rubric of the *Apocalypse*. The writer's phrase about Patmos and it are to the book what the *directions* are to a drama. "I was in the isle that is called Patmos, on account of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus: I was in the Spirit on the Dominical Day"—these words should be printed in red: a red notice for a *Red Day*. It could thus become the angle of vision for modern non-Semitic readers.

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Comm.* ad loc. i. 10.

Now the Lectionary of the Synagogue is the ruling authority for the Feast of Tabernacles, and therefore our starting-point, if we would begin the ritual understanding of the *Apocalypse* and of the ways of written Jewish apocalyptic. The Lesson for the Day was Zechariah xiv.<sup>1</sup> It undoubtedly was once a document separate from the rest of Zechariah's prophecies ; <sup>2</sup> that is to say, it was one of the documents of the Tradition. Its contents everybody knows. It celebrates the Day : one of unfading light. " No night is there." It envisages a perfect Day of Tabernacles. Let the festival be kept with complete ritual care and abundance of rain will fall for the life of Nature and of man. Jerusalem also will be a transformed place. Even the lowliest cooking-pot in it will be consecrated to the service of Jahweh. It might be argued, if John was a writer with creative imagination he could have found the first sketch of the *Apocalypse* in that document. It moves on from the Day to the city made new. The dramatic timing is right, according to the view just stated. It can be granted that some one or two of the chief motives of his book find expression there. But if we take a step backwards or forwards in the first chapter of the *Apocalypse*, we shall find that this argument will cause us either to begin to multiply the sources of mosaic or to come upon ideas and matter which the Tabernacles document could not have inspired. Moreover, if we omit the Letters in chapters ii and iii,

<sup>1</sup> *Megillah (Bab.)*, 31a.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (1923), 65.

and begin to read chapter iv with its thrones and gleaming stones and strange Creatures, we shall be told that our apocalyptist is borrowing from Ezekiel i. Again we are brought to a dead-end. John is a mere worker in literary mosaics. And he is committed to the piling-up of sources as he writes chapter after chapter.

Another appeal to the Lectionary of the Synagogue brings more light. Ezekiel i. is found to be the Lesson for the Feast of Pentecost. Its ancient name was ' the Chariot ',<sup>1</sup> the moving chariot-throne on which Jahweh went to judgement across the sky at a time of festival. It will be noticed that this Feast has to do with one more element for the life of Palestinian body and spirit. Grapes and corn and rain are the life of men in Palestine. Water was indeed the very source of life, physically and philosophically, for man there. If rain was coming then the judgement of Jahweh was not against them. Both Nature and they were to live on.<sup>2</sup> The Gemara to the first section of *Ta'anit* has the most vivid illustrations of this truth in the whole range of Hebrew literature. Four early rabbis there record what they think of " the day of rain ". One says it is of more importance than the day of the raising of the dead ; since on that day only the righteous can hope to rise, while the rain falls on the evil and the good. Two of them agree that the day of rain

<sup>1</sup> *Megillah, cit.*—see also Thackeray, 46 f.

<sup>2</sup> It is very necessary to grasp the real basis of this matter. Accepted views ride off to other so-called higher conceptions by help of the terms ' judgement ' and ' life '.

is as important as that on which the Law was given. And Rabbi Hama bar Hanina is certain that it is just as important as the day on which the sky and the earth were created. Without going into more detail at this point, we should conclude that the apocalypticist has still in mind the Tradition of apocalyptic, and is not bound by the verbal authority of the Lectionary. The significant lead of the Lectionary is towards our recognition of the fact that both Zechariah xiv. and Ezekiel i. are documents or descriptions of factors in the history of the rite which is fundamental to Palestinian religion, that is the rain-rite. When the details of chapter iv are taken up, it will be seen how free the apocalypticist was of dependence upon the verbal control both of Lectionary and Lesson.

Already it is shown in this preliminary glance over the ground of our investigation that, though the *Apocalypse* has its own focal perspective—that is the Feast of Tabernacles—it is occupied with the older rite which inspired the major festivals of the Hebrew religion. Its hold upon John is not because he has a scholar's and a reformer's interest in origins. As a most gifted apocalypticist he uses the actual source of his art, the Tradition. Then when we meet the phrase "the day of the Lord" in a traditional document, such as Zechariah xiv.,<sup>1</sup> we can be sure of having come upon the right authority for the phrase in John's *red* notice: "the rubrical" or "dominical day". The total structure of the *Apocalypse* will attest this conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> xiv. i, 7, 9, 13, 16, 20.

It is necessary at this point to go both backwards and forwards in chapter i of the book that we may gather from it some of its main motives. For example, we go back for John's own title to his book ; and his own challenge to contemporary apocalyptical claims, which is like trumpet music to herald the announcement of his rubric. Then we go on to his own description of the Unique Actor in this apocalypse and to enquire into His many names.

The title of the book is its first sentence: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*". Our title is *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. These two are neither alternatives nor equivalents. There is a gulf fixed between the word 'apocalypse' which is found in both titles. The first should mean what Jesus had said and done and their effects upon Jewish apocalyptic. The second certainly means what John saw and said in apocalyptical style. When the book of the first title is interpreted in the terms of the second title, then the purpose of the writer has been defeated. That this has been done most of the books on the *Apocalypse* bear witness. A more profound proof is found in the centuries of thought which have produced the figures and teaching of the Enochic Christ or of the Heavenly Man or of the Son of the Carpenter who dreams as all apocalyptists have dreamed. These compounds, of ill-known and late Syrian speculation, or of Hermetic genealogy, or of Synoptic criticism carried to its logical issue, have been made in large part by the foundering of Jesus in the "charmed seas" of Jewish apocalyptic. Whether from the

point of view of the writer's craft of ideas or of his use of the Tradition of apocalyptic, we appear to have done our best to invert both him and his Lord. Whereas, though John is an instrument played upon by the content and time-rhythms of apocalyptic: he is as well the musician who orchestrates the old music for the 'new song'. Whatever trills in his nerves as a Jew is subject to what illuminates his brain as a Christian. He is a most awake and sensitive thinker who at no moment yields himself to the hypnosis of apocalyptic. It will follow that such a writer's title will alone harmonise with his intention. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* by John is a true description: *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* is an untrue description. The first fits the book: the second contravenes its whole purpose. And it is his title which alone can make sense of John's declarations of his themes, his rubrical statement, and his account of the Only Actor.

Those 'Amen' verses of chapter i, verses five to eight, have been described as the trumpet music of an overture. They are often muted to the tones of liturgical chant or prayer. There is no translation of them which at present does not yield this liturgical impression. Nor is any change suggested by the examination of the manuscripts and versions made, for example, by Charles and Hoskier.<sup>1</sup> Where we have not called them chant or prayer, we have been content to describe the first block of verses as 'greetings'; because verse four says, "Grace to you and peace". There are of course

<sup>1</sup> *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse* (1929).

parallels to the phrase in other New Testament documents. But they nowhere have a liturgical close. An apocalypse might do an unexpected thing. This *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, however, will do nothing that is not inherently apocalyptic. That can be laid down as a canon of criticism. Two other verses in the book offer us an explicit attestation of this view, and also guide and warrant for a very small textual alteration. In chapter iii and verse fourteen, we read, "Thus saith the Amen, the Witness, the Faithful, the True, the Beginning of the creation of God". Again, in chapter xxii and verse twenty, we find, "He which testifieth these things saith, Yes: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus." One verse is clear: the other is confused. In chapter iii John is allowed to speak his own mind: in chapter xxii his flashing return to his opening chapter is jumbled by bad punctuation and sense. The clear verse makes the *Amen* another name for Jesus. It may be noticed that if this is carried back into the opening of chapter i the accepted text benefits. For instance, verse eight is doomed to excision by certain critics. If, however, the *Amen* be read as a name for Jesus we have an imperial statement as to who would come on the clouds and be seen by those who had pierced Him: "Yes, the Amen: I am the Alpha and the Omega; the Lord; the God; the I am; the I was; the I shall be; the Almighty". The word 'saith' is to be dropped out as *codex Meteora* 573,<sup>1</sup> for instance, directs. Further, the two chief Coptic

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Hoskier, *cod.* 200; von Soden, *cod.* a 1075.



versions of the *Apocalypse*, the Sahidic and Bohairic,<sup>1</sup> offer a unique reading at vii. 12. The angels and presbyters and the four Living Creatures are worshipping the Enthroned One—the received text ineptly begins and ends their praise with a liturgical Amen. These two Coptic versions have retained an article before the first Amen. A careful reading of the text of chapter vii will bring out the propriety and truth of the worshipful use of the name *Amen*. This consciousness of the presence of the article in the original text, and therefore of the *Amen* as a name for Jesus, is again evinced in v. 14. There a large group of Greek cursives has the reading τὸ Ἀμήν,<sup>2</sup> a plain change of the masculine into the neuter article. Thus it is Jesus who is the *Amen*, who has loved us and made us kings and priests, and who is on the apocalyptic throne.

Let us again bring together chapters i and iii concerning this important matter. The series of names in iii. 14 is already before us. In i. 5 we read another series of names for Jesus: the Witness; the Faithful; the First-born of the dead and the Over-lord of the kings of the earth. Between this series and the second in verse eight, the name *Amen* occurs twice and clinches with splendid asseveration the triumph of Jesus over death in behalf of others. Here was trumpet music indeed for Semitic ears, and in passages which ended with the asseverative name declaring the overthrow of

<sup>1</sup> Hoskier, ii. 208, who cites Horner.

<sup>2</sup> Hoskier, ii. 163.

the dreaded sovereignty of the place of the dead. Before the *Apocalypse* is done we shall find John's remarkable witness to that achievement of his Lord. The problem of this name is not then a contrived or unnecessary one. It is an essential strand in the structure of John's book. Let it be supposed that all this is true, we ought to ask two searching questions. Has this singular name and association the guarantee of the Tradition of apocalyptic? Also is there reason why both should appear in the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*?

From the first century, that is from Eliezer ben Hyrcanus down to the mediaeval author of *Yalkut*,<sup>1</sup> there is evidence for a striking apocalyptical incident. We are told that when the folk in the place of the dead say 'Amen' to the worship of the folk in the synagogue, then the gates of Hades will open and they will be released unto life. This therefore is a constant note in Jewish apocalypses. We learn further, that this would be achieved after Jahweh had revealed a new Torah of the Messiah. In a word, this apocalyptical fragment tells of the coming of a new Moses, one in the line of *the Man*. It fits into the Folk-saga. Since it is the theme which Eschatology turned into the hope that at the End Moses himself would come again. What of the *Apocalypse*? The fragment puts the hope of an 'Amen' on the lips of the dwellers in the place of the dead: the *Apocalypse* declares Jesus to be the Amen as the conqueror of Hades. The former

<sup>1</sup> ii. 296 (Isaiah xxvi. 2); *Eliyahu Zutta*, xx; *Shab.* 119b; for other evidence see Ginzberg, *Jewish Ency.* i. 492.

speaks of a new Torah: the latter proclaims His revelation unto life. John has displaced the hypothetical response by a historic Person: the weary burden of Semitic thought, the inescapable place of the dead, with the unique triumph of the Revealer. It was the very change the apocalyptist would have to record if the Semitic mind was to be won. It is as well a primary factor of the revelation of Jesus Christ: 'I am the resurrection and the life'. There is even more than this in the majestic reiteration of name and achievement. What that is will be found to uphold this disclosure of apocalyptical influence and its transmutation.

Before passing on to the picture of the Sole Actor, the closing words of the *Apocalypse* must be glanced at. It has been pointed out already that this is another instance of the liturgical use of Amen, according to the received texts. Some authorities omit the word:  $\alpha$ , 2050, Tyconius, Primasius, *codex Gigas*, Philoxenian Syriac and Old Armenian. This is to be looked upon not as a scribal slip but as an indication of trouble with the sense of the word. Early scribes, like late editors, have had to make their own punctuation here and elsewhere. Papyrus copies of the *Apocalypse* had no stops or very few. A fragment from Oxyrynchus,<sup>1</sup> containing the sixth verse of chapter one, aptly illustrates that fact. It and the easily elided masculine article account for the conditions of the extant texts. Further, the name could have stood originally without the article

<sup>1</sup> Hunt, *Oxyrynchus Papyri* (1911), viii. 1079; text in Charles, *Comm.* ii. 447.

as does the title 'Son of Man' (i. 13). Will you go on to notice that the phrase which introduces this word Amen demands the new meaning. It reads : 'The Asseverator of these things says'. Such an introduction cannot refer to the interpolated threat of plagues upon any who shall do harm to the book. It refers to the great things said and done before. These demand the simple climax of asseveration : 'Yes, I the Amen am here'. The artist in John moved him to repeat at the end what he had done at the beginning of his book. He is like a musician returning to a principal theme. The structure of the *Apocalypse* merits this likeness to the texture of music.

The Unique Actor is before us from the first words of the *Apocalypse*. In the title of the book ; in the heralding music we have discussed ; in the sets of names. Yet none of these could put Him directly into the context of the Tradition of apocalyptic. The apocalyptic craft demands that he should be set there. John must describe him as his predecessors have done. Many have said the same thing, but with a different emphasis. For they have meant that John has done no more than his fellow-craftsmen. They make out that his picture of the Unique Actor is not by a master, nor a copy of one ; but a composite copy of all the masters. John might thus have been a student in a gallery of apocalyptic art and have borrowed from every picture hung on its walls. Let us anatomise the picture to demonstrate his borrowings. Hair : " presupposes Daniel vii. 9 and 1 Enoch xlv. 1 ". Eyes : " Daniel x. 6 ".

Face: "goes back to Judges v. 31". Feet: "drawn upon Daniel x. 6, also vii. 7". Voice: "Ezekiel xliii. 2". Two-edged sword proceeding out of his mouth: "goes back to Isaiah xi. 4 (Lxx) and ix. 12". That is its chief anatomical points according to Charles. Lohmeyer, a representative German student, gives pretty much the same account. Nestlé, as an example of the annotators of the book's Greek text, makes an analogous anatomical chart. America in the person of Montgomery has tried to give the picture some originality. He tells us that "the mystical name does not mean for him (*i.e.* the apocalyptist) the commonplace 'like of a son of man'; it has become a title in and for itself, and he dares to express himself so: 'Like-Son-of-Man'".<sup>1</sup> This critic is inclined to make John do wonders with syntax, whilst he leaves him with the brain of a sedulous though accomplished copyist in art.

He who draws *the Man* or a *Son of the Man* cannot be original. Every student of apocalyptic must make that admission. But it ought not to turn him into that sort of aesthete who never looks at the picture in the *Apocalypse*. It may sound like a paradox to say that the commentators seem to be aesthetes of that kind. They raise their eyes to all the pictures in the gallery of apocalyptical art save to that by John. Take again a detail of his picture, the sword. We are told, "the sword that proceeds from the mouth of the Son of Man is simply a symbol of his judicial authority". Was that found out by

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* 80.

looking at John's picture? It is rather a deduction from two Isaian passages, one of which it is supposed John must have read in Greek; and the other either remembered or read in Hebrew. It is not to be denied that in Jewish apocalyptic the joining of a sword to Jahweh or with a Jahvistic prophet or angel meant judgement.<sup>1</sup> John, however, was a thinker as well as an apocalyptist. His sword is the revelation of Jesus Christ — which is the title and regal subject of his book. Or take again another feature of the picture: the head with snow-white hair. We are told that this belongs to Daniel vii. and *Enoch* xlii., and that "it is here transferred to the Son of Man".<sup>2</sup> Once more this is a deduction from the two passages cited. John is credited with a literal source or sources; and as well he is supposed to have taken something from the 'Ancient of Days' who, by the commentators, is looked upon as Jahweh, and has given it to the 'Son of Man'. These are two illustrations of aesthetic opinion formed by downcast eyes. They do not interpret John: they subscribe to a literary theory. But both can help us when examined with care to exacter views of our author's picture, its significance and sources.

The sword of the revelation cannot be separated from the effects of the figure of the Revealer upon the apocalyptist. He fell at his feet like a dead man. That is no touch by an accurate observer of abnormal states which are said to visit the receiver of an apoca-

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Hebrew Enoch*, xxxii. 1 ff.; Jellinek, *Beth Ha-Midrash* (1853), iii. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Comm.* i. 28.

lyptical message. The writer of the *Apocalypse* is a wide-awake man. When understood, he will be found to be one of the most acute and alert minds which had learnt from Jesus Christ. His vivid phrase describes his place as a disciple: a Semite who now was under the fact of death and the fear of the place of the dead; then a disciple through belief in the Revealer and revelation of Life. A balancing vividness of phrase describes the progress of an alive disciple: "He laid his right hand upon me saying, Fear not, I am the Living One. I have the keys of death and of the place of the dead." Jesus is not here the Judge of apocalyptic but the Life-giver of His own revelation.

The clusters of His names ought to have made that clear to us. It is a first century way to say big things through names. They did not thus make quintessences of dogma. A good deal of later Christology has done perverse things with them because of that assumption. They were at first given to Him, either because He had suggested them or because they were with others in the same source He had used. His usage and John's has yet to be disclosed. It comes out in an effortless way if the names are regarded in their proper context.

Take the series: Alpha and Omega; I was; I am; I shall be; the Almighty. The Jewish apocalyptic *Aleph*, which is Hebrew for Alpha, is a name that Jahweh's chosen man can bear. *Taw* is another, and is Hebrew for Omega. They are said to confer upon the holder powers of judgement over

princes and the place of the dead.<sup>1</sup> Such names and powers call up others borne by Him : the Firstborn of the dead and the Over-lord of the kings of the earth. It is easy to see with what naturalness the Revealer can claim His own power of the Keys. Let us glance at certain of His other names : I am ; I was ; I shall be, *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*. The I shall be was a name caught from the lips of Palestinian peasants. The disciples of John the Baptist knew it<sup>2</sup> as a name for the expected man of Jahweh. An attempt has been made<sup>3</sup> to find the source of this name in the first of the eighteen synagogal *Benedictions*, the *Amidah*, wherein it is prayed that a *Goel* shall be brought to Israel because, for instance, of the piety of the Patriarchs. This is an ancient prayer. For the psalm in the Hebrew *Wisdom of Sirach*, li. 12 ff. was imitated from it. But a name on peasants' lips is not likely to demand a recondite source. The process of reducing that prayer to such an ordinary name is something beyond the powers of ordinary Palestinian folk. It can be only the colloquial opposite of the name 'I was'. The man in Palestinian streets got it from the saga which dominated the mind of his people. Two other names, the First and the Last, gain a colloquial guarantee by the help of another source. Josephus tells us that.<sup>4</sup> This the Talmud affirms.<sup>5</sup> Again they are Jahvistic

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Hebrew Enoch*, xlviii. (C) 1 and xlviii. (D) 5. For the alphabetic equivalents see *Genesis Rabba*, 81 (52a) ; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar* (1926), iii. 789.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. xi. 3 ; Lk. vii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, *The Q Section of John the Baptist and the Shemoneh Esreh*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1926), i and ii, 42 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Antiq.* viii. 11. 2 ; *Contra Apionem*, ii. 22. <sup>5</sup> *Shab.* xii. 13a.



names unencumbered with theological speculation. But a suspicion of this type of speculation will keep breaking in. It seems to keep most of the commentators cheerful. When John was on Patmos he was geographically nearer the nimble intellectual air of Athens than to the supposedly heavier atmosphere of Palestine. Still it does require a commentatorial form of imagination to speculate whether in those two names, the First and the Last, there is an Orphic or Platonic element.<sup>1</sup> The two of them say in numbers what Alpha and Omega said in letters of the alphabet. They say no more when lengthened out in this manner: the Beginning of the creation of God. We spoil the simplicity of such a name when we put down Proverbs viii. 22 for its first five words, "the Beginning of the creation". For then we may as well compile an almost endless list of references for its last two words, "of God". If an apocalypse springs from the mind of a people, we can be sure that the figure it enshrines will have names known to that people. Literary names come not out of but over their heads. The perfect apocalypse which is the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* would defeat its aim if it had given place to such pedantry. One other name has need to be discovered before we can point out the differences between names in apocalyptic and in the *Apocalypse*.

That name is *Son of the Man*. For source it leads most of us to Daniel vii. In 1931 a learned Rabbi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Comm.* ii. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Moses Gaster, *The Son of Man and the Theophany in Daniel*, ch. vii. (*The Search*, 1931), 15 ff.

found that in Daniel the 'Son of Man', as he calls him according to custom, was none other than Moses. That find had been made independently by me, but it is good to have such support in what is almost a lonely pursuit. We will follow the details of the Rabbi's statement later. The name becomes an eminent factor in the saga of *the Man*. Moses is a or the *Son of the Man*. The attempt to transfer the name from the *Books of Enoch*<sup>1</sup> to the pages of the New Testament is neither wanted nor warranted. Since the problem actually is this: what is its source in Daniel, *Enoch*, and the *Apocalypse*? The answer is the apocalyptical saga. This same source has been drawn upon in many other New Testament writings. A most profound influence, it has hitherto been unrecognised by scholars. The understanding of what it has done, and has not done, will alone set right that fundamental of first century thought and of all subsequent treatment of it — whether Jesus Christ was subject to Jewish apocalyptic or had subjected it to His revelation. That is a task for another time. The immediate one is to state that the name *Son of the Man*, as it ought to be rendered, is a great factor of apocalyptical saga. That the most outstanding bearer of the name in the Old Testament was Moses. And that this name has come into the *Apocalypse* from that source. This and its other names for Jesus bring us to the same conclusion: they come from the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, ed. 1912, 306 ff.; Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (1914), 23 f.

saga of *the Man*. It is that which composes the principal part of the Tradition for apocalyptists.

This rapid and introductory review of some of the problems of the *Apocalypse* causes us to see that its writer was not a passive or entranced recipient of polychrome dreams from all the quarters of Jewish apocalyptic. Whatever part dreams or prophetic manners play in Daniel or Ezekiel, we shall be likely to comprehend them best as we allow for the control of the stuff of the Tradition over them, whether sleeping or waking. It is of the utmost importance that this should be done for the writer of the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*. Thus it will be found that he is as awake in his use of what appears to be the dream-laden material of the Tradition as in his use of its names for his Lord. All the names he uses for Jesus Christ are as connotations of the affirming name, the Amen. John does not transfer but transmutes apocalyptical matter. This he does, not as one who is infusing new colour into old tissue of dream, but as one who has grasped the transmuting principle of the revelation of his Lord. The ancient saga is not draped upon another hero: it is transformed in all its parts by becoming the vehicle of the new *Apocalypse*. This message is meant to reach humble men and women. Hence John's handling of the theme. What was said to have happened on the mount of Transfiguration has been done here in another way. Moses has gone. He and we see Jesus only. Another Torah has displaced the expected re-enactment of Moses' Law. One

other than Moses has assumed the name *Son of the Man*. Without venturing further upon these high matters at present, we may remind ourselves once more that this name is connotative, with the others, of what is affirmed to the world of men in Jesus the Amen. Then we can turn to the lowlier subject of the structure of the *Apocalypse*, and see how it leads us back to the same lofty themes.

## SECTION II

# THE LIVING CREATURES, THE THRONE, AND THE SYNAGOGUE



## II

### THE LIVING CREATURES, THE THRONE, AND THE SYNAGOGUE

AT the outset of an examination of the *Apocalypse* for its structure, we are met with what looks like a deterrent two chapters long, in the shape of a bundle of letters. It may be claimed that they might have been expected from what was said in John's first chapter. Still for most people a bundle of letters is a bundle and no part of a work which is said to have dramatic movement. Some of us, indeed, would not alter that idea when it is pointed out to us that the letters are associated with star-angels. Perhaps the commentators have helped to fix this opinion upon us: they do like to treat the letters as if they were material for the apocalyptist's biography — an almost certain way of ensuring that the letters become dead ones. But a Syrian, for instance, would not hold that opinion of them. Let us ask what a Palestinian poet of the second century, who wrote a song on just such letters as are in the *Apocalypse*, would think. "And his thoughts were like a Letter", he writes.<sup>1</sup> "His will descended from on high, and it was sent like an arrow which is powerfully shot from a bow . . . a Wheel received it and carried it: and its sign

<sup>1</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, xxiii. 5 ff. The rendering is mine.

was of the Kingdom and of Sovereignty . . . the Letter was with authority, for it was sent to all lands; and there was seen at its top, the Head and Revealer, even the Son of Truth from the Most High Father."

We can dismiss our usual notions of a letter or of a postman, or even of express postal delivery, for that, as we know, is at work in the Near East as in the West. The Odist has told us what our letters are and what their most swift flight — whilst the way they come is surely dramatic enough for the most advanced theorist of drama. His description and the contents of the letters agree. 'The seven stars are the seven angels of the churches', says the *Apocalypse*. The *Son of the Man* held them in His right hand to send them arrow-wise to Ephesus and the other places. They were not planets or some entangling piece of Babylonian astral thought which clung to His fingers. They were simply apocalyptic messengers. But how does an angel who is a star move with a letter that is on a wheel? Perhaps it was Michael the archangel that John, and the Syrian singer, had in mind; we know that John was thinking of him in chapter xii. We can call on lore for the answer from ancient Ireland and Egypt and Syria. A homilist writing in Old Irish <sup>1</sup> says: "Or else it was an angel of God that appeared in the form of a star". A famous Syrian writer of the ninth century <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Homily on the Epiphany*, xxxii. 478 (Atkinson, *The Passion and Homilies from Leabhar Breac*, 1887).

<sup>2</sup> Ishodād of Merv, *Commentaries* (ed. Gibson), v. 16.



dealing with the coming of Jesus writes: "It was not a real star . . . but an angel who shone like a star from Persia to Bethlehem". Let us name him Michael and turn to Coptic literature. In a volume of Coptic sermons<sup>1</sup> on the archangel he is described as having: "in his left hand a wheel like a chariot, upon which was a cross". That is his insignia. The union of angel and star comes out in a Sahidic fragment, and in which there are echoes of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. It tells us:<sup>2</sup> "For it was not a star like all the stars, but it was a great star in the form of a wheel, its figure being like a cross". Other evidence could be cited. These little pieces are sufficient for our purpose. They fit together, as everyone can see, and yield us the composition of a star-angel or apocalyptic messenger, according to Near Eastern Folk-belief. Seven of these were in the right hand of the *Son of the Man*. There is then no delay in the dramatic action of the *Apocalypse* when its letters, by the will of the Revealer, pass from Patmos to the mainland as if borne by a flight of angelic or starry chariots. There is little call for us to linger over their contents. They were meant to carry us on to the purpose of John's book. Thus, as we watch them leave the hand of its Sole Actor we are borne most directly to the consideration of the structure of the *Apocalypse*.

There is a description of its structure which so

<sup>1</sup> Budge, *St. Michael the Archangel* (1894), Coptic 128, English 103.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* (*Cambridge Texts and Studies*, iv. 2), 162 f. I have pillaged an article of mine in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (1919) for references on the star-angels.

sums up its various parts as to bring it into line with other apocalypses. This account of its divisions runs: (1) The ascension of the seer into heavenly places; (2) the opening of the Book of Judgement; (3) the picturesque process of judgement; (4) the establishment of the great white throne; and (5) the disclosure of the City of God. No other description is required if the view be true that the *Apocalypse* is like any other Jewish writing of its sort, except in its Christian amalgam. The fault of such a description, however, is that it elides all that is distinctive in the book by the help of what does not exhibit the nature of the true literary representatives of Jewish apocalyptic. Therefore before we can set down the formal lines of its structure, we must enquire what is the plan that apocalyptic itself lays down. It is a happy thing that the Hebrew *Apocalypse of Moses*<sup>1</sup> can be called to our aid — once a most influential but now a neglected writing.

It is not a long one, and its construction is very simple. Moses, like Dante, is to be shown Hell and Heaven. Enoch, one of his predecessors as *Son of the Man*, turns his physical being into fire before he ascends through the seven heavens. In the first the rain is stored; it is a place of many windows. In the second are the angels put over rain and trees and corn. The Temple is in the fourth: a structure of red and green and white fire with gates of carbuncles; and there are the angels over stars and planets. In the other heavens are

<sup>1</sup> Jellinek, ii. xiv. ff.; Gaster, *Studies and Texts* (1925), i. 125 ff.

the venerable men of Israel ; the Holy Watchers ; Judgement and Death. The places of dreadful torment are very much like those described in the Akhmîm fragment of the early second-century *Apocalypse of Peter* ;<sup>1</sup> since *Moses* is its undoubted source. The *Apocalypse of Moses* closes by Gabriel showing the Lawgiver Paradise and the Tree of Life. Seventy thrones are there also — of emerald ; pearl ; amber ; and gold for the great and the good Patriarchs. There is as well one of copper for Terah, who had worshipped idols, but who gained enthronement because of Abraham's piety. From the Tree of Life issues a spring of living water which divides into four streams. And from under each throne flow four rivers : of honey, of milk, of wine, and of fragrant balsam.

It is interesting to note that the fourth-century *Apocalypse of Paul*<sup>2</sup> has borrowed the topography and horrors of the underworld from the Hebrew writing. It is touched lightly, here and there, with Hellenistic ideas. When Paradise is described (chapter 28) there are some differences. For instance, the four rivers are of honey, milk, wine, and oil ; and are named Pison, Euphrates, Tigris, and Geon. Its city is called Jerusalem (chapter 29). That touch may have come from our *Apocalypse*. It is just as likely to have come from Semitic cosmo-

<sup>1</sup> Bouriant, *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire* (1892), ix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> James, *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, ii. 3, 11 ff. Cf. Casey, *Journal of Theological Studies* (1933), 16 for variations in treatment of four rivers, and for account of the oriental versions of the apocryphon, pp. 3 ff.

logy. The additions in this Pauline apocryphon are, moreover, too poor to have been inspired by John.

Before any comparisons with the *Apocalypse* are made, it will be well to pencil in the plan of the Gizeh Greek fragment of the *Books of Enoch*, a sixth-century manuscript of an apocalypse which, because it is useful in the interpretation of some phases of the New Testament, is liable to be treated as a work of such a date as to have influenced the original text of that book. Its striking difference from the *Apocalypse of Moses* is the large and opening play it makes with the narrative of a fall of the angels. The place of their banishment is clearly North Palestine. Enoch does ascend from the earth, but as a human being. He was not changed into fire. He was shown heaven with its two houses: one of crystal and the other of fire. There he also saw the throne of the Great Glory, and a river of fire from beneath it. He visits luminaries; stars; treasure-houses of thunder, winds, and running water. Then he is shown the hollows of the places of the dead. They are three in number, and one alone is lit by a spring of bright flowing water. There the dead lie with no hope of escape. Enoch's itinerary closes among the seven Palestinian mountains—the chief of which is the centre of the earth, and on it grows the Tree of Life. Of the Tree it is said that it will be transferred one day to the Temple.

It seems a natural question to ask: did those star-angels introduce such a book as would be like the *Moses* or *Enoch* apocalypses? Some answers offer

themselves at once. John makes no survey of a septuple celestial world or of a sub-terrestrial one. That is a broad difference primarily between him and the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and secondarily between him and the *Books of Enoch*. Setting the latter again side by side with John's book, another answer comes as quickly: John has no Enochic myth of the fall of angels. Ought then total differences between him and them to be affirmed? The best answer will be to sketch in the structure of the first part of the *Apocalypse*.

John makes no ascent to the sky. He says, "I saw" — that is his mind was most quick and sensitive. "I saw . . . and I was in the spirit at once." There is no reason at all to put him into a state of trance between those two phrases. They who do so awaken him to do strange literary acts. John, they suppose, saw when entranced "a glassy sea before the throne"; and then he awoke to borrow from the Greek of Ezekiel the two words of description "like crystal".<sup>1</sup> It is not a hazardous judgement which denies that he did anything of the kind. What then is filling his mind so luminously? "Lo, a throne set in the sky" with an emerald rainbow about it. The enthroned elders. Seven lamps hung before the throne. The four Living Creatures coming up from what looked like a crystalline sea. That is no more Ezekiel than the *Apocalypse of Moses*. He touches both at some points, but not as a borrower is linked with a source. This can be most easily proved by noting how the apocalypticist

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Nestlé margin *ad loc.*

sees, and then what he sees. For his mode of sight created the *Apocalypse*. That mode can be defined by means of a fascinating illustration. It is from one of the greatest of the world's poets, Virgil, and by the British scholar who best understood him. Warde Fowler was lecturing on the lustral rites of ancient Rome.<sup>1</sup> He was showing how Virgil had caught in his verse the majestic progress of the clouds, and in one word, as Aeneas talked with Dido, had etched in the original source of the rites and the march of their ritual processions: "So long as the cloud shadows move slowly (*lustrabunt*) over the hollows of the hills".<sup>2</sup> Then he added, "Long ago when fishing in Wales I watched the procession of the shadows, and ever since then it has been associated in my mind with the many ancient Italian processions which I have had to study". Both poet and scholar are aware of the fertility origins of the rites—Virgil as a Latin and Fowler as learned in Latin religion. Whether the clouds were seen over Italy or Wales, both are moved to write, in his own medium, of the lustral rites of Rome. John sees in much the same way. His is a most thoughtful manner of sight. He first knows as a Semite; then as a Semite with ordered mind. One half of his intellect, so to say, is subject to *mimesis* of the saga: the other half organises and sifts and speaks. For him to attempt an exercise in apocalyptic will bring him under the Folk-spell; and for him to write the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* will cause him to submit

<sup>1</sup> Warde Fowler in Marett, *Anthropology and the Classics* (1908), 169 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Aen.* i. 607 ff.; cf. iii. 429 ff.

that spell to Another whose servant he is. A glance back of the memory over the details of the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and a comparison of them with chapter iv of the *Apocalypse*, manifests that when their possible analogies are deducted from the text of that chapter a large residue is left. It is usual to find that residue in Ezekiel i; though it is altogether unusual to draw any attention to the possible share of the *Apocalypse of Moses*. What can be plainly seen is that when a deduction of these two claims is made, there is a residue which appears to belong to the writer himself.

The late Dr. Edwin Hatch<sup>1</sup> suggested that here John had drawn on his knowledge of the early Christian society, and had placed a council of its wise old men or elders about the throne of the *Son of the Man*. Among others, Harnack<sup>2</sup> followed him in this view. That at best would have been a conscious act on John's part as an apocalyptist, and an original one as making a portion of an apocalypse. The elders have been traced by others to several literal sources.<sup>3</sup> That is to be expected with the ruling commentatorial predisposition which declares John a worker in literary mosaic. It is, however, difficult to find them, and not a little fantastic to consider that they could be found, in those mystical 'sons of God' spoken about in the Book of Job;<sup>4</sup> or as derivatives of the 'Ancient of Days' in Daniel;<sup>5</sup> or as a selected band from

<sup>1</sup> *The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches* (1882), 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Sources of the Apostolic Canons* (1895), 10. 1; cf. Funk, *Doctrina Duodecim Apostolorum* (1887), 62.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Lohmeyer, 43.

<sup>4</sup> ii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> vii. 9.

the heavenly host, which Micaiah saw, standing on the right and left hand of Jahweh ;<sup>1</sup> or as a group from among the ' ancients ' before whom the Lord of Hosts shall reign according to an Isaian vision.<sup>2</sup> There is no natural affiliation of the elders with either of these claimants. Such old men or elders would be of substance which is too remote from what is wanted in chapter iv as useful apocalyptic matter. But, we must ask, had they then the substance which Hatch gave them ? Or again : was not the whole of this section of the *Apocalypse* inspired by a single source very different from that proposed for one of its items by that revered scholar ? He gave us an excellent lead when he suggested that the feature of the elders about the throne should find its parallel in contemporary Palestinian life. It is one which must be followed. And for the necessary evidence we must go from Patmos to northern Syria. There we shall find the first answer to our questions.

From some points of view, the small city of Dura-Europos, on the middle Euphrates—which looks towards Palmyra and through her on to Byblos by turning the line of sight a little to the south—is the most remarkable archaeological site in Mesopotamia. It has kept so much of what we most wanted to know of ancient churches and synagogues, and in a condition which makes it the most wonderful of open-air museums. Mesopotamian cult-shrine ; Mithraic sanctuary ; Christian church and Jewish synagogue almost jostle one another,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Is. xxiv. 23.



and with a wealth of material in them which cannot here be catalogued. Church and synagogue are both nearer the first century than any other like buildings yet uncovered in the land of the birth of the two institutions. In 1933 Professor Clark Hopkins, then of Yale and now of Michigan University,<sup>1</sup> who was directing the work in Dura, issued a preliminary statement of the latest finds on the site. A third-century synagogue had been laid bare. It was decorated with a splendid series of frescoes. The throne of the chief of the synagogue was intact. And two inscriptions, one in Greek and one in Hebrew, had been found. These are of absorbing interest for students of the origins of both church and synagogue — as indeed are all of its archaeological features. It is safe to say that no archaeologist, whether Jewish or Christian, had ever dreamed of such finds in structures of so early a date. The mosaic pavements, for example, of other Palestinian synagogues, though of the fourth century, are crude works of art beside this earlier Syrian work. This is not the time to give a detailed treatment of the frescoes.<sup>2</sup> But certain con-

<sup>1</sup> *Illustrated London News* (July 29, 1933); cf. *L'Illustration*, Aug. 6, 1933. See also *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (June 1934) and *The Christian Chapel at Dura-Europos*; iii *Congresso Internazionale di Archaeologia Cristiana* (1934), 483 ff. I have been privileged to study the frescoes in photographs sent me by my friend Professor Clark Hopkins. The official *Report on the Synagogues* (1936), 12 ff., has a detailed account of the structure.

<sup>2</sup> I should state here that I have investigated the whole subject of the filiation of the Dura frescoes and their relations with Western frescoes and mosaics, and that my statements in the text about the Saga of the Man are based upon fresh findings. These will be published soon.

clusions which other scholars have not yet recorded must now be summarily set down. These frescoes represent in pictures the Saga of *the Man*. The great Jewish succession, from Adam downwards, is depicted. The frescoes go from the throne, right round the building in two great bands one over the other, and return to the throne. *The Man*, who is Moses, is painted in panels on the left and the right of the pillars, and in both bands of frescoes. His face is made to shine out from the panels. That is in keeping with ancient Hebrew ideas. Among the frescoes, no festival is pictured except the Feast of Tabernacles; a most notable exception. There the water-rite is being carried out in harmony with the precious information which is wrong-headedly relegated to the margin, or placed between arrow-headed brackets in the text, of the Gospel of John v. 4 — that is the Bethesda story. What is the throne like? It is a monumental seat in a vaulted recess. The vault is supported by the two decorated pillars, and round its inside border is a banded design of grapes and other fruits. On its outside, and rising from the tops of the two pillars to the level of the lower great band of pictures, and thus above the exterior of the vault to the throne, are drawn the seven-branched light; the *ethrog* (or citron) and the *lulab* (or ritual palm branches); the veiled Ark of the Law and the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac. On this decorated throne sat either the spiritual presence of the *memra* as Wisdom, or the actual roll of the Law. Both are substitutes for *the Man*. We learn too that by its side is

an undecorated seat and that he who sat on the throne was known as the *presbyteros*.<sup>1</sup> He did not "sit on Moses' seat". We have then actual evidence in this most ancient synagogue for the throne and the *presbyteros*. Much else will fall into place as we follow our quest. For we must answer a question which leaps at us from chapter iv of the *Apocalypse*: where are the Living Creatures?

They are to be found in such circumstance as to bring out the full significance of the throne. To trace this we must go from the synagogue to a Syrian church which was not in Dura. There is a Syriac manuscript in Berlin, *Codex Sachau* 221,<sup>2</sup> which contains the history of the monastery of Daira d'Umra and of the building of its church.<sup>3</sup> Much other information is also in the manuscript, both before and after the mentioned material, which merits attention.<sup>4</sup> In the section on the church occurs a description of the Holy of Holies at its east end. "In it was a throne", says folio 80 of the manuscript, "which consisted of a single block of white marble, six and a half spans long. It had four sides, and four figures severally carved on them :

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins, p. 189, Fig. 7; for figures of Adam and Moses, 4, 5, and 8; Tabernacles, 22; throne, 8 and 10.

<sup>2</sup> Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften der Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, ii. 584 ff. I have to thank the Direktor of the Oriental Department for a valuable supplementary description of the whole MS. (5. xii. 34). My attention was called to this very valuable passage by Wensinck, see *op. cit. infra*. His study is altogether a very instructive one.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Parry, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*, 214 ff.

<sup>4</sup> The life in and history of the monastery and of a famous abbot are described in detail—a valuable piece of Eastern monastic history.

a lion ; a bull ; an eagle and a *Son of the Man*. . . .<sup>1</sup> Over the throne was a bronze cherub, and over all was a bronze cupola upheld by pillars of emery stone." The importance of that passage cannot be exaggerated. At present we educe those points which will illuminate the synagogue throne. It can be proved, without any doubt, that the Syrian church *cathedra* is the child of that throne. Then the figures of the Living Creatures belong there also. Since the church has put into marble what the synagogue kept in ideas. For throne, vault, pillars, and Creatures are originally components of the basis of Semitic thought—that is the idea of the cosmos. In a phrase or two this was the idea : the rectangular block was the shape of the world ; the four Creatures are images of the four winds ; two or four pillars supported the vault of the sky. You will note how easy it would be for a thoughtful Semite to see these synagogal ideas, which we have found were also Palestinian church ideas, in the sky as on the earth. He would not have to think hard to do that, or to concentrate as if he were engaged in a feat of imagination ; least of all would he have to call in the help of conditions of trance. Since the Semitic idea of the cosmos, whose details have been just sketched in, was said elementarily to have that form

<sup>1</sup> This is the literal translation of the phrase. Compare the throne described in the Ethiopic work called *The Miracles of Jesus* (ed. Grébaut, *Patr. Or.* xii. 562), where its seat is upheld by the four Angels, 'who are called the Four Creatures'. Or the description in Ba-Hayla Mikael, *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth* (ed. Perruchon and Guidi, *Patr. Or.* i. 1, 38), where the thrones in the Tabernacle have four sides and graved like the Syrian *cathedra*.

on the earth and in the sky. It was as if these two forms were placed one over the other.<sup>1</sup> Given a Semite with John's powers of intellect and apocalyptic skill, we may judge with what natural ease he would see and express these things in his fourth chapter. We are then tracing throne, *presbyteros*, and Living Creatures to the synagogue. There is another individual note in that chapter which must be united with them — the glass-like crystalline sea.

To do that we have first to follow the archaeologist. His spade never cuts marshalled furrows in any land. We go from Mesopotamia to North Africa. Near Carthage is the small town of Hamman-Lif. A chance discovery in 1883 laid bare the remains of another ancient synagogue. There, fifty years before Dura, had been found a vaulted throne but no frescoes. Instead before the throne was a mosaic pavement which, as to its subject, is still without a parallel. Very little attention has been given to it since Renan's time.<sup>2</sup> His description left the subject in a characteristic haze. That has prevailed with the few writers<sup>3</sup> who have noticed Hamman-Lif down to the recent article by Leclercq.<sup>4</sup> The Benedictine archaeologist has here and there succeeded

<sup>1</sup> Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth* (*Verhandlingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam*, Af. Letterkunde, N.R. xvii. 1, 1916), 43 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue Archéologique* (1884), i. 273 f., Pls. vii to ix; *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1886), 48 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Schlumberger, *R.A.* (1883), i. 157 ff.; Kaufmann, *Revue des études juives* (1886), 48 ff.; *Études d'archéologie juive et chrétienne* (1887), 3 ff.; Icard, *Bulletins archéologiques du Comité des travaux historiques* (1910), clxvii ff., 288 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, vi. ii, 2042 ff.; Leclercq, *Manuel d'archéologie chrétienne* (1907), 511 ff.

only in thickening the haze. Some shapes appear though with fantasy on them. What Renan, for instance, spoke of as a 'round object', he describes as the indicator of the building's orientation; although it would have been impossible to tell by it how the building lay. A great fish which is depicted in the mosaic is associated by him with a whale, which Augustine records was thrown upon the Carthaginian coast — this he does with the connivance of Philippe Berger.<sup>1</sup> No reasons are given why a Jewish artist, or art-work in a synagogue, should memorialise such an event or evince favour for the bishop of Hippo. What then is the subject of this panel in the pavement? Its centre looks like a series of concentric circles in red with a four-pointed star in the inner circle. A great fish is on either side of it. Water-fowl and water-flowers are on the surface of the sea. On the side of the panel which was nearest the throne are unfortunate defects. Enough is left to define what were the subjects, for a large part of a bull's head comes just beyond the defect on one side and from the other projects the pinions of a big wing. What is the interpretation? The circles in red which are star-topped compose the flat representation of the Semitic idea of the cosmos — the red cupola under the Polar Star.<sup>2</sup> Arabic evidence, for example, most definitely supports this picture and interpretation. Ṭabari says of the cosmos that it was "a red mount in shape

<sup>1</sup> *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1893), 104. The passage in Augustine is *Ep.* cii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> See Wensinck, 38 ff. and 47 f.

like a cupola".<sup>1</sup> The Semites held that it could be either round or square in form. The fish is Leviathan, with possibly the consort Behemoth. The bull's face and the large pinions are evidence of the presence of the Living Creatures which, as always in early art, rise from an apocalyptical sea.

The single and substantial source for our apocalyptist, in chapter iv of his book, is the Synagogue and its actual condition of ideas, practices, and earliest art. It is not meant that in the first century these conditions were aesthetically and optically realised as we have them, by a synthesis of the decorations of two synagogues built in the centuries succeeding his own. Ideas which were at home in first-century synagogues created them. It is these ideas which inspired chapter iv of the *Apocalypse*. We must remember too that for the Semites the cupola-wise cosmos was upborne by two or four pillars. And again that they thought of the sky as being cupola-wise — a sky counterpart to the earth as a cupola. Further, it can be demonstrated most exactly that the very throne next which the *presbyteros* sat in the Dura synagogue was the architectural embodiment of these conceptions. What the Hamman-Lif synagogue had done was to make that fact more explicit. It is as mosaic midrash to the Dura throne. Turning for the moment from things to persons in chapter iv, we should understand that they as well come from the Synagogue to John. The *presbyteroi* were the honoured and wise in synagogal life. Their number

<sup>1</sup> *Tafsir*, i. 409.

is a Johannine or apocalyptic convention.

On the side of Johannine art, we conclude that he would not require to pass into trance to see in the sky what had been put there by centuries of Semitic Folk-thought. Any more than he would have need to be borrowing an item, here and there, from Ezekiel who, like himself, was dependent on the Tradition of apocalyptic. But John would want his own acute mind to lay hold upon this cosmic conception in a synagogal context. Here he would be more than ever awake. For beyond the writing of chapter iv, he had to inweave the inspiration from this substantial source, as we shall discover, into the sensitive structure of his book.

The *décors* which alone is alive enough to fit his Unique Actor is the Synagogue. Before the throne burns the seven-branched light, a *menorah* with unusual oil: it is lit by the seven spirits of God. John has touched a strand of Jewish apocalyptic, and it has become oil and wick to light a synagogue upon whose throne his *Son of the Man* could sit. An Isaiah (xi. 2) has said that Jahweh's man should have seven graces of moral self. He called them 'spirits', according to the psychology of his day. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons,<sup>1</sup> preserves the information that each of these spirits was allied with one of the seven heavens. Thus the Jewish chosen man would gain them as he ascended through the septuple scheme, like his great predecessor in the

<sup>1</sup> *Demonstration of Apostolical Preaching*, 9; *Adversus Haereses*, iii. v; cf. Justin, *Trypho*, lxxxvii. 2 and xxxix. 2; Cyprianic *Testimonia*, ii. 11.



*Apocalypse of Moses.* It may be noted that only in this seven-branched light, and possibly in the sevens of angel-messengers, does John make any reference to the more complex celestial conception; he is content elsewhere with the simpler conception which is also that of the basic apocalyptic Tradition. What then was attained by the labour of apocalyptic ascent has become a lighted lamp for Jesus the *Son of the Man*.

Once more, the Living Creatures are turned into singers. From Semitic images of the four winds they have become the choristers of the new *Kedusha*. Later they turn from the winds of the world who are the Living Creatures into the four winds of the Spirit who are the writers of the four Gospels. It has not been seen before that this was their origin.<sup>1</sup> Day and night in the new synagogue they sing: "Holy, holy, holy; the Lord, the God, the Almighty, the I am, the I was, and the I shall be". An illuminating contrast with this song is to be found in the *Hebrew Enoch*, because it embodies two instances of singers and songs in early Jewish apocalypses.<sup>2</sup> "And some of them utter the 'Holy' and others the 'Blessed', some of them run as messengers, others are standing in attendance, according as it is written: 'Thousand

<sup>1</sup> In the mediaeval Ethiopic writing called *The Miracles of Jesus* (ed. Grébaut, *Patrologia Orient.* xiv. 794), Jesus turns the Living Creatures into Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. This may point to the stage of transformation before or imitation of that of the Four Evangelists.

<sup>2</sup> Odeberg, 3 *Enoch*, or *the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (1928), xxxv. 4 (Dan. vii. 10).

thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him : the judgement was set and the books were opened ' . . . and then they sang the song antiphonally, as it is written : ' and we cried one to another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts : the whole earth is full of his Glory.' " The Hebrew *Kedusha* has not become the Greek Trisagion by being sung in strange circumstances. That might appear to be true if the words are translated, for instance, as in the Authorised and Revised Versions. There God is lauded because He is eternal. The text was not meant to convey that theological truth. After the thrice repeated ' Holy ' comes a number of names, the names of the Amen of the *Apocalypse*. That is the ceaseless song of the four Living Creatures ; another striking novelty in an apocalypse. Since it is the four quarters or winds of the Semitic cosmos which have become singers of this song. The rich meaning of this new fact will appear as we proceed. The four are not then the cherubim in the Temple, a view which has had wide acceptance. It is also that which has worked confusion in many more than one treatise on the *Apocalypse*. Its writer knows the ancient convention of a sky-temple in Jewish apocalyptic. He must be allowed to bring that also under the influence of his own piercing grasp of things about him and of the things of Jesus Christ. He has enthroned his Unique Actor in a synagogue, which is the embodiment of Semitic cosmology ; and all its details are athrill with a novel and enlivening content. It is this which

weaves the delicate web of the book's structure. First, its lines must be traced beyond chapter iv ; then, a return will be made to that chapter to explore in it a second potency of structure.

There are two situations in the *Apocalypse* where those lines plainly manifest themselves — in xi. 19 and xv. 5. These are very significant points in the structure, both for the Semite and the Christian in the author. The first of them, in the length of a verse, tells us that " the temple of God which is in the sky was opened ; and there was seen the Ark of the Testament ; and there followed lightning ; voices ; thunders and great hail ". The second, in the same space, says " the temple of the Tent of Testimony in the sky was opened " ; and the seven angels with plagues issue forth. The former description is accepted as indisputable ; the latter as disputable. One is said to be in harmony with Jewish apocalyptic, because the Temple does appear in the sky as we have seen from the *Apocalypse of Moses*. The other is out of harmony with Jewish apocalyptic, because it causes the Tabernacle to extrude the Temple. Therefore, it is proposed to excise " the Tent of Testimony ", and leave the description to run : " the temple in the sky was opened ".<sup>1</sup> This is textual surgery done at the dictates of the opinion that the Temple is in chapters iv and xi and xv. But John was writing in the first century when the Synagogue had displaced the Temple. He was aware too, as we have seen, in a complete and deep manner of the cosmic background

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Comm.*, *ad. loc.* xv. 5.

of synagogal appurtenances. What dominates him in the chapter where he had to describe the *décors* for his Unique Actor is likely to rule him in the other two chapters. Then too the Greek of xv. 5 does not identify *ναός* and *σκηνή*, and so make the disputable assertion which would lead to the necessity for textual surgery. What both xi. 19 and xv. 5 are saying is that the 'ark' of the one and the 'tent' of the other are parts of identical appointments and concepts in the synagogue. Let us again try to illuminate this problem by the help of archaeological evidence. In a Russian museum there is an ivory pyx whose date is about the fifth century.<sup>1</sup> It offers extraordinary evidence, because on its front is carved a vaulted throne, just as was found in Dura ; and on its seat is the open book of the Law. *Ethrog* and *lulab* are hung on either side of it, and over all is a lamp hanging from the sky-vault. On other sides of the pyx incidents from the life of Moses are carved. With this should be united the better known evidence of certain synagogal mosaic pavements. On these is found the Ark of the Law. The mosaics of the Beth Alpha synagogue,<sup>2</sup> for example, show us this Ark under or with a sky-vault, again as at Dura ; a lamp hanging beneath it and over

<sup>1</sup> Darnel, *Collection Basilewsky* (1874), 6, No. 29 ; Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana* (1873), vi. *Tav.* cxi ; Cabrol, *Dictionnaire*, iii. ii, 1595 (Fig. 2920), where the throne is faultily described as a 'ciborium'.

<sup>2</sup> Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of Beth Alpha* (1932), 19 ff., Pl. viii ; for other references see, e.g., Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece* (1934), 20, 30 f., 35, 53 ff., Pl. ii, b. With this may be compared the evidence of ancient Jewish gilt glass : Perrot, *Catacombes de Rome* (1851), iv. Pl. xxiv. 23, 29 ; xxviii. 61.

the veiled book of the Law. The Ark is shaped as if to fit the throne ; that is it is angle- or niche-wise in form. That the throne and the Ark of the Law pass into one another is suggested already by the representation of the veiled Ark over the vault of the Dura throne. The pyx and the mosaic pavement surely demonstrate this transfusion of object, and therefore of evidence. Moreover the terms *σκηνή* and ' vault ' are cult and literal identities, when their history is followed out. The identity of *ναός* and *οἶκος* is without contest. And inscriptions inform us that the latter term is a description of the synagogue.<sup>1</sup> Further, Josephus actually calls the Synagogue of Antioch *ιερόν*. The recognition of the place of the Synagogue in John's thought not only will save the text of his book from mutilation ; it also asserts itself as an original factor in his opinions, and resultantly in the structure of the *Apocalypse*.

Where these three chapters, iv, xi, and xv, find unity ; there the *Apocalypse* presents a second feature of structure. It has been anticipated in its rubric of time and place. We have said that John is inspired by the *corpus* of apocalypses found in the Lectionary of the Synagogue. He knows, indeed, two orders of apocalypse — the Mosaic or cosmic and the temporal. One of the remarkable characteristics of this writer's use of them is that with the cosmic sort he is always the Christian thinker

<sup>1</sup> Oehler, *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (1909), 29 ff.—e.g. Nos. 57 and 65 ; Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain* (1914), i. 457. Josephus passage is in *Antiq.* viii. iii. 3.

and with the temporal sort he is often the Semitic listener. His use of the two and his two-fold way with them are incorporated in his book.

It has been seen that our apocalyptist has gone behind the Feast of Tabernacles to the water-rite which made it and the Feast of Pentecost, though his time for the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* is a Day of Tabernacles. The little apocalypses which compose the Lectionary readings for the two festivals will be, then, the best representatives of the temporal sort and of the ideas which influenced John. Ezekiel i., as we have heard, is known of old as "the Chariot". It also is a throne, and the sky counterpart of the one which is in early synagogues or his own chapter iv. It moved across the firmament, borne by the four winds — an awesome and majestic display of cloud and light. Thus it came on festival days unto judgement of rain or drought, favour or disfavour for Palestine. The little apocalypse of Habbakuk iii.,<sup>1</sup> a Pentecost document, tells of the same process. Zechariah xiv., the Tabernacles lection, celebrates the coming of rain to Jerusalem and the day of mysterious light. In it there is reference to the city as on the cosmic cupola. Now at Tabernacles the chariot-throne stops of course at the *Centre* so that Jahweh, or his representative, may descend to dwell in a tent whilst the feast lasts. An ancient midrash on Psalm lxxii. 2, which is the proper psalm for the Day in the synagogal Lectionary, states that in the beginning of the creation of the world Jahweh made

<sup>1</sup> On Habbakuk iii. as a document separate from the rest of the prophet's words, see Thackeray, 45.

a tent to dwell in <sup>1</sup>— that would be on the ' Centre '. These points make clear that the strata which lie deepest in Tabernacles have to do with the Semitic ideas of the cosmos. Hence we may conclude that these ideas created both sorts of apocalypses ; one sort giving more room to the ideas and the other attention to the ritual and time associated with the ideas. It is their basal unity, and not any literary interest, which causes John to show that he knows both types. Their radical ideas move him and not their differences in literal dress. In the last analysis, both types of apocalypses and our apocalyptist meet in the Tradition of apocalyptic ; for there the fundamental ideas which are common to them will be found.

It would be curious if John had left no other notes than these of a Folk-order in his book, when the Semite in him had betrayed such awareness of the saga which reigned in the Folk-mind. The chapters which come between the fourth and the end of the eleventh offer explicit proof of the sway of the things of the temporal or Lectionary apocalypses over him. " And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book . . . closed with seven seals." There the writer is responding to their sway ; but not because two phrases from Isaiah vi. 1 and xxix. 11 can be dovetailed so as to appear to equal the two which have been cited. They do not in fact even make fair equivalence ; unless the student is enamoured of the notion of getting literal parallels for some words and of disregarding those

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Thackeray, 69. 3.

for which no such parallels can be found. If he has this partiality — one which many commentators will share with him — he will be found again and again to have no interest in what is most characteristic of the *Apocalypse* and its writer. In this passage the book is on the throne by the side of the *Son of the Man*, and not in his right hand. It was put there in the Synagogue. We have seen it there on the ivory pyx, and known it to be there from the mosaics of the synagogues. We must remember as well that the Torah of Moses was believed, by the earliest Jewish exegetes,<sup>1</sup> to have been the agent of the creation of the world. The song of the presbyters, in the closing verse of chapter iv, had prelusively ascribed this work to the apocalypticist's occupant of the throne. Then the book placed by his side must be the 'New Torah' — and thus concord will be made between chapter i of the *Apocalypse* and a hope of the Folk-saga.

Why then was the One on the throne powerless to open the sealed book? Why should the apocalypticist write 'I wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book'? Is he not denying the powers of the enthroned One? Again arises the grave need to understand the Semite in him and his reactions to the saga of *the Man*. The centuries had created the hope of the coming of *the Man*, and its frustration; and they had evoked corresponding and overmastering emotions in the Semitic being.

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis Rabba*, i. 1; *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, iii.; see Aptowitzer, *Arabisch-jüdische Schöpfungstheorien*, *Hebrew Union College Annual* (1929), 220. 43, for a large number of other references.



The saga could never grow old. It could never be robbed of its power to send the shuddering delay throughout the faculties of that being ; and especially if it were embodied in such a delicately organised personality as was possessed by this particular Semite. The tears of the centuries are flowing through John's eyes. That he does not make the error of causing the One who is on the throne to open the book is a tribute also to the mastery of the Christian thinker in him over the ancestral tendencies. He must meet the conventions of apocalyptic or lose his cause. When they have been met, then the novel factor in John's apocalyptic work can manifest itself. Even now he does not do this in an obtrusive manner, as if the Christian apocalyptic ' eye ' could say to the Semitic apocalyptic ' foot ', " I have no need of thee ". The old and wise men of the Jewish Synagogue who have come to sit round about Jesus Christ are his comforters. They dry his tears. John causes them to be aware of the One who is able to open the book, as it were, before he is himself aware of Him. Then too, it should be noticed, that he makes those elders speak of Him in language which is native to themselves and to Semitic apocalyptic. What shines in it and them and himself creates the *Apocalypse* and its message.

In proper course, John gives the enthroned One another apocalyptic name, the Lamb ; a name which was known as such, for example, to John the Baptist. The name *Son of the Man*, as borne by Jesus, meant for the apocalypticist His historic

presence as Revealer; and the name Lamb, as borne by Him, meant His historic presence *plus* the achievement of His revelation in the conquest of Death and the place of the dead — that is the full significance of the *Amen's* work. That is why He bears the name Lamb as a blazon of light in the new Jerusalem. It is doubtful that there is even a side-glance in it at the use to which Isaiah puts the noun 'lamb' in his fifty-third or Jeremiah in his eleventh chapter. Even if John had made the noun into a name; he could not have done that according to the modern theory of the Suffering Servant. The idea is too grown-up; it has been to too many Universities to fit an apocalypse. The likely source for the name Lamb, both for John the Baptist and our apocalyptist, is the ancient Pentecost Lection and its festal context — Leviticus xxiii. 12. Such a course is in keeping with John's use of the Tradition and his literary workmanship. This name for Jesus would have to be able to keep company with His other apocalyptic names. For the Baptist, this source would be a natural one. Its recognition might help also to clear up a point in the narrative about him, where he is said to call Jesus *ἀνὴρ* (John i. 30)—a name without an article. The Baptist will not be weighing the niceties of a doctrine of the humanity of Jesus Christ; but simply calling him *the Man*, because he knows the saga and is himself in the line of descent. The evidence of early Christian literature shows that the two Greek forms, *ἀνὴρ* and *ἄνθρωπος*, were used for the one name, *the*

*Man*.<sup>1</sup> We can find John's own confirmation of this view of the name if we will listen to the choir, greater than that of angels and Living Creatures and presbyters, when they intone: "And every created thing which is in the sky, or on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things that are in them, I heard saying, To the enthroned One the Lamb, blessing and honour and glory and power unto the age of the ages. And the four living creatures said, the Amen, and the presbyters fell down and worshipped." The One who bears the several names is the reason for worship: the *Son of the Man* who is the Lamb and the Amen is the object of the worship of creation; and there is here no Johannine intention of describing an impulse towards a general gesture of obeisance which could be closed with a world's liturgical 'Amen'. John was not a Neo-Platonist, nor a forerunner of the mystic who borrowed the name of Dionysius the Areopagite.

With the opening of the seals, the two orders of Jewish apocalypse appear to assume a large measure of rule over the Semite in John. The Lamb may unseal the new Torah; but what happens after that is, for the most part, the same as might have been expected to happen on any day of the festivals

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Trypho*, xxxiv. 2; lix. 1; lxix. 1; cxxvi. 1; cxxviii. 1, 2. Justin is evidence enough to prove the point. Other authorities are, e.g., *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zaccheus*, 46 (ed. Conybeare); Eusebius, *Eclogæ Proph.* i. 14, iv. 4; Gregory of Nyssa, *P.G.* xlvi. 205; Chrysostom, xlviii. 815; Gregentius, lxxxvi. 656. Latin writers, of course, have only Homo—e.g. Cyprianic *Testimonia*, ii. 9, 10; Maximus Taur., *P.L.* lvii. 796; Gislebert, cix. 1020; Peter Damianus, cxlv. 45.

of Pentecost or Tabernacles. The seven kinds of angels, and the judgements on men and corn and rivers and trees are the same as were seen by the author of the *Apocalypse of Moses*, and the judgements as experienced, year by year, by anyone who had come under the spell of the little apocalypses in the synagogal Lectionary. It is as needless to find any more in them as it is to believe that the apocalypticist was prophesying the future destruction of the world. We must, however, find as much as the Semitic mind found in these matters when it reacted to the chariot-throne coming to judgement at Pentecost and Tabernacles, or when it recalled the Semitic cosmos which lies behind the clustering emotions and ideas of festival-time. How else could the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* reach the Semitic mind? The fresh truth has to come into it in the ancient vehicle. John too would have been less than a human being if the *Apocalypse* had been realised by him in ways free from those garnered feelings, those age-long agonising fears and hopes, and in pictorial terms which knew nothing of the Tradition of apocalyptic. He would have finally defeated his aim in the writing of the *Apocalypse* — that is to show how the revelation of Jesus Christ had conquered Jewish apocalyptic in its two orders of apocalypse, the cosmic and the temporal.

These high considerations are allowed to gleam through the web of Semitic vision. An instance or two will illustrate the point. What is said to be seen at the opening of the sixth seal, the blackened sun and the falling stars; Joel whose apocalypse

is not in the Lectionary and Zechariah whose apocalypse is there, had seen long before him ; and in exactly the same way as John had visualised those natural phenomena of judgement. The Semitic saga enfolded them all in the secular context of feeling and idea. But the thinker in him causes the face of the enthroned One to shine through the Semitic gloom. Or again, we are allowed to see the movement of an ideal gathering of Semites with a numberless multitude of all the ancient world. These proclaim the Lamb, and the elders with the Living Creatures antiphonally sing of the *Amen*. Will you notice the lovely transformation of a synagogal appointment, the vaulted or tented throne. It has been turned into this loveliness : " he that sitteth on the throne shall be vault (or tent) of the sky to them ". Or again, we recall that the water for the life of Nature was thought to come from beneath the cupola of the cosmos. Listen to its transfiguration : " the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of living waters ". Jewish apocalyptic could say no more than " Living water [*i.e.* flowing water] shall go out from Jerusalem " with Zechariah (xiv. 8). But Jesus and the apocalypticist say : " let him come unto Me and drink ". Thence students of early Christian literature will turn to a variant, beautiful with understanding, in Ignatius of Antioch : <sup>1</sup> " water that lives and springs up in me, and says within me, Come hither to the Father ". Early

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Rom.* vii.

Syrian thought altogether harmonises with the *Apocalypse* concerning the revelation of Life.

From the glances and gleams of beauty and truth which no Semitic apocalyptist has been able before him to catch in the web of his writing, we will turn back to the filmy structure of the *Apocalypse*. It is important to realise a very simple thing about the doings of the angels in this book. Its text turns them into a rapid and successive series of incidents. The width of a full-stop only is between each one of them. This is the fault of manuscripts and printed texts. They are not so set out as to convey to us who are not Semites, the pause; the nerves trilling with expectancy; the pulsing of the coming and doing — which are actually between each member of the series. If our manuscripts and books could record such vibrant emotion, we should know at once what time-rhythms are and not have to rediscover them. We could then realise the creative ground-beat of these rhythms which had been stored, for example, in the Lectionary apocalypses during the immemorial years as they circled round from rain-rite to rain-rite, and from festival to festival. A nomad community with a fundamental cult for rain which grew into an agricultural community with a fundamental cult for fertility, became a sort of single but human instrument which registered a people's hopes and fears and dreams, as they recurrently flowed from one celebration of the cult to another. Combine these two sources of time-rhythm in such a community become a settled one, and which has

elaborated and organised the first cult into a cycle of festivals with all its powers of deepening the sense of time-rhythms in a people's being. Then think of a line of Semites who, chosen out by their sensitiveness, will write down these throbbing fears and hopes and dreams. Do you not think that they will have communicated their beat to the apocalypses they wrote? It is plain that no one can get to the heart of the *Apocalypse* unless he appreciates this primary fact of their composition. He has to hear the throbbing of the very heart of the Semitic people. We Westerners must know how long and yet how swift, with what dread pause and processional step one image passes into another, when we muse on things under the charm of an idea or an event much greater than ourselves. At such times the drama or tragedy of life is for and in us. Imagine then an unusually endowed Semite who, on the great day of his people's year, answers in all his powers to that inner drama which had played its palpitant parts within Semitic folk for untold centuries—and you will be at home with the man who wrote the *Apocalypse*, and you will go on to realise that time-rhythms are the pulsing blood of it and of apocalyptic.

It has been said that the little apocalypse of Zechariah could be viewed as if it were a pencil sketch of the *Apocalypse*. It begins with the Day and ends with the city of perfect ritual. Its presence in the Lectionary assures to it an endemic part in the warp and woof of the Semitic mind. It both creates apocalyptic and is reacted upon apocalyptic-

ally by the people and the select band of apocalyp-  
tists. It is a coagent with other influences to fill  
the Folk-spirit with the sensational significances of  
ancient rites. It is also a delicate organism which,  
with each revolving year of ritual, is informed with  
the expectations of people and waiting apocalyp-  
tists. It alone could be read at any time of the year by  
either of these, and memory would turn it from a  
strip in a synagogal book-roll to an alive thing —  
with people ; land ; a mystery of unearthly move-  
ment and voices, unitedly arustle behind the words  
and filling their gaps. It will be well to make a  
kind of diagrammatic plan of this stirring life  
which invaded such a document. We all might  
thus be enabled to read it apocalyptically, and  
realise how actual a document an apocalypse like  
Zechariah xiv. is.

Let it be supposed that the Day of Tabernacles  
is a most sultry day, one with the promise of storm.  
There is cloud ; fitful sunlight, now strong and now  
veiled ; distant thunder ; flashes of lightning which  
pierce and transpierce the moving clouds ; rever-  
berations among the hills, like great antiphonal  
voices, and no rain. For the Semite, Zechariah  
xiv. is keyed down to stern judgement against man  
and Nature. The messengers come from the seven  
heavens and the seals are broken. This dark day  
has come . . . surely " the spoil shall be divided  
in the midst of thee ". The words of the apocalypse  
are followed as the chariot-throne moves on its  
journey across the sky. And here in the first gap  
in the text comes the shuddering sense of judgement ;



the pause of anticipation concerning what is to come ; then the visual and aural sensations of the second messenger. A second seal is broken, and the majestic voice is heard : " I will gather all nations against Jerusalem . . . but a residue shall not be cut off ". Here is the second gap. It is filled with the tragic and triumphant history of Israel. This again is visually and aurally present to the reader of or listener to the words. The undying hope of the ' residue ' is slight. It alone is sufficient to make an apocalyptical document tremble with imparted emotion. For every sense of the Semite will be strained to hear the wings of the next messenger, as if all the day's doings were fresh to him : a tale which the years have not told and yet have told to his fathers. The third angel comes and the third seal is broken : " The Lord shall go forth and fight ". There occurs the third natural gap in the text. This is filled with the sound of Jahweh's footfall. ' The shield of Abraham ', the ' Mighty One of Jacob ', and the ' Goel of Israel ' moves out to battle. Oldest dreams and ritual prayers — all that the centuries have gathered of aspiration and worship and fear into the many names of Jahweh—mingle to attune the Semitic ear and to lend majesty of sound to the Warrior. What if that footfall stayed ? It surely requires little imagination to understand the invading dread and the throbbing sense of judgement.

So Zechariah xiv. might be treated for our duller senses, though only the simplest temporal idiom has been used. We may perhaps never understand these apocalypses until they are exquisitely dramatised

for us. This rough annotation of the Zechariah apocalypse, for our Western eyes and ears, emphasises the need for us to be aware of time-rhythms in apocalypses as we are of word-rhythms in poetry. Lacking these, there is no apocalypse and no poetry. Such dry bones of apocalyptical material the Folk-mind could not sponsor, and the second could not harmonise with John Keats' opinion that it should be "a perfect thing of the elements, winged and sweetly coloured".<sup>1</sup>

Besides this simple idiom which fills every step in and between apocalyptical incidents, there is evidence for what may be called a larger idiom of time-rhythms. For instance, "a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (viii. 1). A little puzzle which is not solved by an appeal to the Talmud,<sup>2</sup> when it says that the companies of angels, which sing by night in the fifth heaven, kept silence by day that Jahweh might hear the praises of Israel. Moreover, the text of the *Apocalypse* has to be arranged differently to meet the Talmud, so that it may represent God listening to the prayers of the saints.<sup>3</sup> An apocalypse ought not to require such complex expedients for its understanding. That is an opinion which should naturally arise in criticism of this view of the phrase from the temporal idiom of apocalyptic. An appeal to *Hebrew Enoch* <sup>4</sup> yields the illuminating answer. When Rabbi Ishmael ascended to the presence of Jahweh, there was silence

<sup>1</sup> Weller, *The Autobiography of John Keats* (1933), 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Chagiga*, 12b; see, e.g., Charles, *Lectures*, 27; Lohmeyer, 70.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Charles, *Lectures*, 23 ff.; *Comm.* i. 194 ff.; Lohmeyer, 70.

<sup>4</sup> iv. 30.

of an hour before " the Holy One, opened to me the gates of the Shekina ". This silence came before a special act or utterance of Jahweh, even as does that in the *Apocalypse*. Another example is the phrase " a thousand two hundred and three-score days " (xi. 3) which comes in the incident following the opening of the seventh seal. An inwoven phrase of the narrative enables us to understand that the writer has Elijah in mind ; for rain is to be denied the earth during that period of prophesying. Now Elijah is in the succession of the Sons of *the Man*, the subject of the Semitic saga. The context in which this temporal phrase occurs sets aside the notion that John could have chosen that one feature from the Old Testament story of Elijah. But if it is a feature of the saga, and in its account of the prophet of Carmel, then there is a naturalness about selecting it for use in the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*. For did not Jesus Himself include Elijah in the names of the Sons of *the Man* ? Our apocalyptist has used the phrase several times in chapters xi, xii, and xiii. He would do so because of his sense of the greater figures in the saga, and especially of those who were brought into contrast with his Lord.

In chapter xviii he is back to the elementary members of the temporal idiom, ' a day ' and ' an hour '. But with chapter xx comes a harder and higher term from this dialect : ' a thousand years '. A Hebrew semi-apocalypse, the *Book of Jubilees*, says : " for one thousand years are one day in the testimony of the heavens ". *Talmud* and earliest

Hebrew interpretation <sup>1</sup> are most familiar with this apocalyptic idea. The *Kûran* <sup>2</sup> also knows it. John uses the phrase in the Semitic manner. It again is from the Tradition. He has no more interest in the end of the world than he has in the problem of Mars and its inhabitants. We are dealing with time-rhythms in an apocalypse written by a Semite, who is also a disciple of Jesus Christ ; and not with an impossible arithmetic of prophecy. What is here outside the apocalyptic idiom of time will come up for discussion in its right place.

The angle of vision for the *Apocalypse* has been stated in its rubric. John is seeing and hearing all things from chapter i to xxii within the space of one day, the Day of Tabernacles. His experiences of the incidents which compose the course of that day's influence : the judgements ; the agents of the judgements and the succession of apocalyptic garments with which judgements and agents are robed — these belong to the Tradition of apocalyptic. Their poignancy or majesty or potency took on processional form with the recurring cycle of festivals. Fertility or infertility for Nature, and favour or disfavour for men who ritually worshipped Jahweh or who failed in ritual service ; these are the principal lines of apocalyptic judgement. What prophets, properly so termed, did was not done by apocalyptists. Prophets also assumed another attitude and rôle when they took

<sup>1</sup> *E.g. Sanhedrin*, 97a ; *Genesis Rabba*, xix. 8, xxii. 1, lxxxviii. 2. See Aptowitzer, 239. 115, 116, for a long catena of references.

<sup>2</sup> 22. 46.

to apocalyptic. The apocalypticist was limited by the Tradition of his craft. His aims were prescribed. The early prophet was limited only by his own faculties ; and was virtually limited in the later stages of Israelitish prophecy by the examples and utterances of the greater ones who were dead. Recent research has begun to explore for the base of all Hebrew prophecy, and is coming to believe in a documentary or traditional base ; but it is so small and of such a growing nature that it is most unlike the powers which control the makers of apocalypses. Thus it is not helpful to find in the most recent and learned commentaries on the *Apocalypse* a reassertion of views concerning them which confuse again the functions of apocalypticist and prophet. It is a mistake to make the former a dealer in 'concrete issues and concrete events'.<sup>1</sup> His concern is with religion even much more exclusively than the prophet. It will also be shown that the chief themes of his references to religions other than those of his people are traditional ones. In other words, they come from the Tradition of apocalyptic. A prophet's eyes are on the world, if he is one of the gifted men of his craft. An apocalypticist's eyes, if he is a Semite, are on the things of the two orders of apocalypses and especially as these are connected with the festivals. Political issues do not touch him. What progress in moral idealism is made, as apocalypses get further away from the sources, has to do with the removal of foreign accretions to the original deposit and with

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Lectures*, I.

spiritualising the picture of the city which comes with *the Man* of the festival documents. This kind of reform is not of a prophetic sort. The vision of the city, which came with every return of the events of the Festal Year and was in all the apocalypses of the Lectionary type, was not prophecy. It came into being, when the throne moved across the sky, as did apocalyptic judgements, by the sovereignty of cult and festival and cosmic idea.

There is thus no support for the recent view that "like all Jewish apocalypses, which are not of composite authorship, the New Testament Apocalypse represents a succession of events following chronologically or logically one upon another".<sup>1</sup> That is an outworn view put into the language of criticism. What chronology is in either Jewish or Christian apocalypse is apocalyptic and not calendrical. What logic is in them is the logic of Tradition and festival and is unknown in the schools. Both of these controls dictate a classic progress. When its limits are reached the progress begins over again. For the Semite there was as little monotony or lack of novelty in these results of control, as for the Greek whose drama was ruled by the unities. Charles has claimed for his idea of "a succession of events" in apocalypses, chronological or logical, that it gives the final blow to what he calls the "recapitulation theory" — that is the possibility of finding in an apocalypse a repetition of the classic progress of apocalyptic incidents. We have advanced beyond what little

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Lectures*, 2.

part Victorinus saw of this truth. There is increasing evidence to maintain it as truth, which gives it better sanction than the support of a somewhat weak Patristic thinker. This idea of the commentators is as well the corollary to their view of apocalyptic prophecy. It doubly makes apocalyptic a *déracinée*. She has no roots in her Folk or Folk-saga.

These confusions on the Semitic side of the *Apocalypse* have resulted in bigger ones on its Christian side. The Semitic maker of mosaics is so conformed with his literary sources that he is either no Christian or awakes to be one only in a so-called prophecy of a millennium in some far-off end of the present scheme of things. What else could be made of John is difficult to see, until we could allow the Semite in him to be natural and the Christian in him to be alive. This most certainly could not be until we had understood that he had written the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*. The whole of this great subject cannot be taken up before my last lecture. One phase alone can be touched here ; and it will concern the hellenisation of John and his Lord.

It is a relief to turn to the invigorating view that Montgomery has of the apocalypstist from the lifeless likeness to a man, or even to the anatomy of a man, which results from so many commentaries upon his book. He writes : <sup>1</sup> " This literary marvel raises the enquiry — in what schooling did this Poet acquire his literary culture ? . . . He is not at all

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery, 75 f.

interested in the Law ; the cult fascinates him for its mystical meaning. The piety of the Psalter is not his, nor the ethics of the Wisdom books. He knows the latter indeed, but only to select their poetical passages. One case is his citation of Prov. 8 noticed above ; the other is his masterly adaptation of the epical παντοδύναμος λόγος πολεμιστής of Wisdom 18. 15 to the Warrior on the White Horse, whose name is ' The Word of God ', 19. 11 f. And note that he draws that term *Logos* not from theology but from poetry."

This estimate continues to be a too exhilarating one. The apocalypticist is not Christina Rossetti quadrupled in size and given another sex. He is a bigger person in another and his own natural way. We are faced again with the claim that John borrows from the Sapiential writings. He is said to have achieved a " masterly adaptation " of the passage which itself is either a reflection of the descent of Apollo from the heights of Olympus on the Greeks, according to an Italian view ;<sup>1</sup> or of the Homeric Athena who had become Sophia, and then had changed her sex and name into Logos, according to an English view.<sup>2</sup> The well-known words from Wisdom will be easily recalled : " Thine all-powerful word leapt down from Heaven, a dour warrior, from out the royal throne upon the doomed land ". It is hard to believe that this large superstructure of adaptation, which is built on a single and undistinguished verb, holds good for the *Book of Wisdom*.

<sup>1</sup> Motzo, *Rivista trimestrale di Studi Filosofici* (1921), 163 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* (1922-3), 56 ff.



It is harder to believe that Homer plays any part in *Apocalypse* xix. 11 ff.; and for the reason that there is no call to put down *Wisdom* as the source for that passage. The whole passage and its structure are Hebraic and apocalyptical. For example, in an *Ascension of Moses*, incorporated into the *Hebrew Enoch*,<sup>1</sup> we read: "and his eyes (that is Moses') were made like as the wheels of the burning chariot". They would have to be if Moses were to become the recipient of an apocalypse. Just as the Lord's would have to be if He is to speak a revelation. The same passage uses the phrase, "the word that goes forth". Now word or name of Jahweh proceeds from the "King of Kings".<sup>2</sup> Either of which has many crowns upon it of fire or chasmal or lightning. As either "goes forth" it is escorted by the powers in the seventh heaven. They "escort each of them like a king", it is said. The eyes of fire; the royal figure and the powers of the word of God are here in their Hebrew setting. They have been little altered by John. Jesus just assumes them. What else is left in this piece of the *Apocalypse* without stated parallel is ordinary apocalyptical material. There is no hellenistic note in the book. It is most certain that the writer never drapes his Lord in a chiton. But John places Him deep in the heart of apocalyptic that he might show how Jesus creates His own *Apocalypse*.

<sup>1</sup> xv. (B) 1.

<sup>2</sup> Odeberg, 162.



### SECTION III

THE WOMAN AND THE CHILD; THE  
WOMAN IN PURPLE, AND  
HAR-MAGEDON



### III

#### THE WOMAN AND THE CHILD ; THE WOMAN IN PURPLE, AND HAR-MAGEDON

ONE of the unsolved problems of apocalyptic is the origins of its imagery. The easy answer which treats an apocalyptist as if he were free to roam the world for images is no answer. It evades the deeper question as to what is an apocalyptist and leaves untouched the question as to the changeless return of elementary imagery in written apocalyptic. The same messengers ; trumpets ; lightnings ; plagues for Nature and men ; the chariot-throne and voices — come in each man's book. They are sufficient to establish the truth of an apocalyptical Tradition. Created in cult, this elementary imagery is fostered by the saga of *the Man*, the Lectionary, and the Festal cycle. By the first as the Folk-vehicle of judgement ; by the other two as the recurring ritual language of judgement. One is seen and the other is heard. Both are as body and close garment to one another. The two are so much of the stuff of the Semitic mind that, in the end, they are indistinguishable. But an elementary type of imagery presupposes a more developed type. A book like the *Apocalypse* does not end with its eleventh chapter ; that is where the elementary gives place to the developed imagery. Its interest begins with

the twelfth chapter, if we may judge from the books printed on the subject of the Beast ; the " Scarlet Woman " and the Millennium. However that may be, the canon of apocalyptic laid down will not merely apply to the first half of the book and leave its major imagery without explanation.

This problem may appeal to some of us as finding an answer in the creative side of an apocalypticist's mind. So many are bound to the view, in one form or another, that he is a Semitic epic-writer whose eyes roam through the eternities. It must be insisted, however, that John has the thoughtful way of sight — the scholarly manner of sight, it might even be described, if we are careful to agree that this description does not mean any approach to the view that he was a maker of literary mosaic. The sway of the Tradition over him has to do with the most radical matters of craftsmanship : it is in no sense concerned with copying or excerpting this or that from the books of the Old Testament. When we realise that simplicity, we can go on to see that there is more than likelihood in the suggestion that if the Tradition controls one-half of apocalyptical imagery, that is the elementary ; it will also control the major or developed imagery. As the two halves of the *Apocalypse* belong to one another, it will follow that search must go on for fuller knowledge of the scope of the Tradition, its contents and its rise.

The remarkable difference between elementary and major imagery, as represented in the *Apocalypse*, is that the latter sort has the character of

plastic art. Strange figures, both human and animal, are moulded to embody some part of apocalyptic drama. Israel had no achievements to her account in that art. How far back the Mosaic inhibition against the making of anthropomorphic figures goes, we do not yet know.<sup>1</sup> A Hebrew Praxiteles has not arisen. The parallel to the long Cretan and other preparation for him did not exist. Israel was no worker in marble. She graved in a more aery and yet more durable medium; and the results are in her apocalypses. Though our apocalypticist is a Christian, he was first a Semite. He has wonderfully achieved in two worlds. Still the new cannot forbid the old world from claiming her share in what he accomplished. She ought rather to welcome the claim, because it authenticates the *Apocalypse* as an achievement. The book and the writer thus have roots of home.

If Israel had no plastic art, she had lived her historic life within a great rectangle where, on three sides of her, were peoples who had practised that art. Let a rectangle be struck eastwards from Ras Shamra to Baghdad; from that city southwards to Babylon; from thence westwards to Gaza—within that area is the example which has indelibly made mark upon her so that she modelled her major imagery of apocalyptic upon its works in marble and stone. On the fourth side was of course the artless sea. Some may ask why was not the westward side of the rectangle dropped so as to include Egypt? The answer to the question

<sup>1</sup> Morgenstern, *Hebrew Union College Annual* (1928), 1 ff.

is that it is to be suspected that Egypt has as little influence in this matter as she had upon Israel's religion and speech, even though Yahuda's erudite speculations<sup>1</sup> try to prove a profound creative part in those last two areas. A discredited pan-Babylonian theory of origins must not be supplanted by a pan-Egyptian one. Nor should that engaging prefix be attached to any other ethnical competitor within the rectangle. Continued research is bringing out this fact concerning Israel that, among the Western Semites, she was the most exacting in her accumulations from others, and the most creative both as concerns her own mental content and influence upon others. There is much to be done before the latter view will gain its right place in the general estimate of her achievements. A big barrier against its acceptance is the erroneous singularity given to what in Systems is called Old Testament Theology. It is equated with Israelitish thought. That means it has as yet little or no historic sense, or the equation could not be made. The work of Jewish scholars in this field is increasingly illuminative; and among them that of Dr. Julian Morgenstern of Cincinnati is of such quality as to command unqualified admiration. Thus there is fresh and large help for us in the gaining of right views upon Israel and her thought, and this in turn will affect our study of the major imagery of apocalyptic.

The ideal conditions would be to find an out-

<sup>1</sup> Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its relation to Egyptian* (1933).



standing apocalyptist who, when treated with careful objectivity, will yield specimens of this imagery and the place of their origins. In the light of recent archaeological discovery, the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel offer just such documents. The origin of the four Living Creatures we have found. Their facial difference was determined by the wind each represented. In Ezekiel they are composite creatures. An animal body with six wings and the face of a lion, or bull, or eagle, or man. It is clear that a series of ideas has taken on a series of traditional bodies. The ideas belong to the ancient cosmic conceptions of the Semites — the pillars and cupola of the earth and their sky counterpart. The corporeal forms are to be traced to the area in which Ezekiel saw them.

It will be remembered that he was with the Israelites who were in captivity. The site of that experience, and also of what he calls his 'visions', was the district of the Khabar — the tributary of the Tigris, and a great waterway of Mesopotamia. The area of its headwaters has yielded to the archaeologist a novel and fundamental Mesopotamian culture. Everyone has long been impressed by the ancient Babylonian and Egyptian cultures — perhaps our state of mind might be better described as over-impressed. A third culture which could have profound influence on Israel was almost unimaginable before the publication of von Oppenheim's discoveries in Tell Halaf, which is on the Khabar. His enlightening book came out in German in 1931 — *Der Tell Halaf, eine neue*

*Kultur im ältesten Mesopotamia* — and a good English translation was made two years after.<sup>1</sup> Tell Halaf was an important centre in the country known to Assurbanipal as Subartu. For the Akkadians it included Middle and Lower Mesopotamia, marching along the borders of south-west Persia, and reaching to Syria and Palestine. Its cultural designation is Subaraic, or more popularly of late and by German influence, Hurrian. What is truly Hittite, and particularly on the side of religion, is part of its heritage. But where it has assimilations with that factor, it has less with Babylonian and none, as to its bases and development, with Egypt. This is not the opportunity to discuss with amplitude either questions of comparative archaeology or of the history of this particular culture. By a fortunate discovery of inscribed tablets, which are to be dated in the twelfth century B.C.,<sup>2</sup> it is possible to begin there and still have commerce with the prehistoric sculpture of the country. Kapara, who reigned then, has left on record the fact that he actually dug up the ancient monuments, inscribed them with his name, and set them up in the city of his building. The archaeologist's spade has disclosed these inscribed monuments, and verified their origins by laying bare the places whence they were dug. Kapara had done this work so well that little was

<sup>1</sup> I quote from this for convenience' sake. The theories of the rise of apocalyptical imagery from foreign mythologies will be treated in my book on the origins of apocalyptic and eschatology.

<sup>2</sup> Meissner in von Oppenheim, 316 ff.

left for any other person to recover. Thus in 1200 B.C. the student is back to prehistoric Subaraic times. In 722 B.C. the Israelites saw these monuments. For Ezekiel shows us that. We shall find too that they made a profound mark on the Tradition of apocalyptic.

The Subaraic range of plastic subject is very different from that of Babylonian or Assyrian cultures. The Hittite offers no close parallels. Therefore, where a visual description on Ezekiel's part can be shown to have an incontestable monumental parallel in Subartu, it can be concluded that origin and originated have been brought together. For there have been found figures in stone, both six-winged and four-winged, with human head and animal's body.<sup>1</sup> Others lion-headed and winged.<sup>2</sup> Others bird-headed, winged, and with animal's body.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere else within the rectangle, we have described, of Israel's historic experience have such figures been found. And these, let it be repeated, are on a site of their captivity. They took with them just that cult and cosmic concept which would enrobe itself in Subaraic form. It may be pointed out with finality that this does not mean that the union of idea and form was made for the first time in the eighth century B.C. Ezekiel records the fact and the site of its origination. We cannot go back into the history of this union, but we can move on to note that Ezekiel is not the only apocalypticist with knowledge of strange zoomorphic

<sup>1</sup> von Oppenheim, Pl. xxxii B.

<sup>2</sup> Pl. xxxi A.

<sup>3</sup> Pl. xxxi B.

forms which had their plastic analogies alone on the banks of the Khabar.

Daniel is in Babylon. He dreams the plastic zoology of Subartu. It is a realistic dream. For in it he saw the four winds as Living Creatures.<sup>1</sup> The ancient cosmic view is holding his mind, whatever his condition of body; and though he is in Babylon. This fact is not yet appreciated by students of this much-thumbed chapter. If then this factor of his vision can be traced to such a source, there ought not to be contest over the tracing of another factor to the source which awesomely clothed the cosmic conception. To satisfy those who are anxious to maintain what they would consider to be the dreamlike and irrational quality of Daniel's narrative, it may be conceded that archaeologists have not yet found, in the area of the Khabar, an animal with "three ribs in his mouth between his teeth". Some critics have claimed that in this matter of most strange imagery Daniel has been influenced by Ezekiel.<sup>2</sup> Such a view turns his dream into a literary exercise. The natural suggestion is that he is drawing on the Tradition of apocalyptic. That is where John found his four Living Creatures; and like the two Old Testament apocalyptists, he found there as well the cosmic scheme whence those Creatures had arisen.

Let these things be granted so that the argu-

<sup>1</sup> vii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Such views could only arise from the impression that early writers had a bound canon of Scriptures like ourselves!

ment may proceed : can we demand of the *Apocalypse* an illustration of this Subaraic influence which has no parallel in either Daniel or Ezekiel? A direct answer to that question should settle the problem of the culture's influence on the major imagery of apocalyptic, and also any doubt concerning the fact of its Tradition. In chapter ix of the *Apocalypse*, after the trumpet of the fifth angel has sounded, there appear animal-bodies with men's faces, hair like women, crowned and with scorpions' tails — strange spawn of the Abyss in the apocalypticist's eyes. It can be seen at once that these were not imported from the *Apocalypse of Moses*.<sup>1</sup> One of its divisions of Hell has wicked humans tortured by scorpions — each of which had 70,000 mouths, 70,000 stings, and 70,000 vesicles filled with poison. The description must be a late one. Its supra-microscopic nature demonstrates that. There is no reason to believe that it could have come in any sense from the Tradition. Certainly John was not devising a variant upon the Hebrew apocalypse's notion of scorpions.

But Tell Halaf has yielded these very figures ; and as if to declare their identity with those of the apocalypticist, they have as well the only item which John's description omits, scorpions' legs which are made powerful and bird-like.<sup>2</sup> What is fantasy to us was full of dread for the creators of such sculptures. The *Gilgamesh Epic*, it may be recalled, mentions prominently the Scorpion-men which

<sup>1</sup> Section 42.

<sup>2</sup> von Oppenheim, Pl. xlii A ; also Pl. xli A and B.

watch at the gates of cities and their "dread awesomeness whose eyes flash death".<sup>1</sup> The epic was known in Subartu in a version native to the country. This may mean an infiltration of Babylonian ideas. But it was the Subaraean plastic art which had imagined and wrought the creatures that, down at least to the latter half of the first century of this era, had continued life in the Tradition of apocalyptic. This same chapter ix of the *Apocalypse* offers its own witness to the area of origin of the major apocalyptic imagery, when it speaks of the lion-headed horses of the Euphrates region. That second specimen of Subaraic zoomorphs, actually labelled with its homeland, must have come to an apocalypticist in the island of Patmos through his authoritative source, the Tradition.

Another complex animal, the dragon, occurs again and again in that half of the *Apocalypse* where the major imagery is used. It has two forms. The simple one is, "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns" (xii. 3). The composite one, "having ten horns and seven heads . . . like unto a leopard, with bear's feet and lion's head . . . and one of his heads as though it had been stricken with death" (xiii. 1-3). During the year 1932 some attractive archaeological finds were made at Tell Asmar, in the neighbourhood of Baghdad. Among them were a pre-Sargonid seal impression and a Sargonid seal — that is to say the first is of the early third millennium B.C., and the second somewhere in the years of Sargonid's reign, about

<sup>1</sup> Tablet 9, column 2, line 7 ff.

2600 B.C. The first is from an oblong seal whose decoration is arranged in three horizontal friezes. The top one has scorpions in pairs, one after the other. The middle one single scorpions, set in a row as in the top. The third frieze has single scorpions on either side of this cult scene : a large serpentine creature once seven-headed has had two of its heads cut off ; one of these is in the right hand of the slayer, a man-figure with a sharp weapon in his left hand, and who is standing before the monster ; behind it is an animal with a bull's head and body and a scorpion's tail. There is a short cancelled inscription in old Akkadian characters. The seal is also oblong in shape. It has a single scene carved upon it. The central figure is a seven-headed dragon, a long right-angled shape of an animal with four birds' claw feet. Four of its heads have been stricken unto death. The alive three crane out from the long neck with menacing fangs and stings. A horned man attacks it before and another appears to be doing so from behind. There are several other semi-human forms on this seal. It has no inscription.<sup>1</sup> The outstanding characteristics of the animal forms of these two seals impose their own classification. They are Subaraic forms on seals from Subartu. Akkad had come into that country, and her things influenced by that incursion could go out

<sup>1</sup> Frankfort, *Iraq Excavations of the Oriental Institute of Chicago* 1932 to 1933 (*Oriental Inst. Communications*, No. 17), 54, Fig. 50 ; *Iraq* (1934), i. 1, 8, Pl. 1a ; Miss Levy, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (1934), i. 40, Fig. 1. There is no call to go back to Babylonian starlore for the dragons as, e.g., Boll, *Aus der Offenbarung Johannis* (1914), 102.

of it. The dates of the seals are of course not against such a conclusion, as may be judged from what has been said already on the ancient culture. They form as well other evidence for the Tradition of apocalyptic and its treasury of imagery from the region of the Khabar. The two forms of the beast or dragon on the seals represent, as it seems to me, the older and later forms; and that both of them passed into the Tradition. We have not to strive to allot them a name and a place in ancient cult, and go on to argue for their adaptation to later Palestinian practices. The Tradition preserves their forms, because of historic contacts with a religion and its embodiments, which seized upon the Folk-mind. Such creatures as we have examined were never from Aegean land or sea. Our apocalypticist uses them in the traditional way and with the meaning known to his fellow-craftsmen. What these were we shall discover. Other material for the Tradition will also disclose itself. It is time to return to chapter xii, whose scenic opening is a synagogal one.

It is remarkable that this woman and child and the war waged by Michael against the dragon should have inspired so large a modern literature, and have exercised so large a measure of interpretative control over the *Apocalypse*. Perhaps this also is due to the lively and enticing influence, as a scientific study, of the History of Religions. Babylonia, Persia, Egypt, Palestine, and Greece have been searched for parallels — and with such results that the hypothesis of an international myth was found necessary



to account for the chapter's complexity. For example, Gunkel<sup>1</sup> put Tiamat at its foundation. Völter<sup>2</sup> set the Avestan dualism there. Dieterich<sup>3</sup> and Pfeiderer<sup>4</sup> found a late myth of Apollo as its base. Bousset<sup>5</sup> turned to a phase of the doings of Osiris for the same purpose. Johannes Weiss<sup>6</sup> called in Paul's aid and built up a basal symbolism of Jerusalem as the 'mother'. Lohmeyer<sup>7</sup> accounts for it all by thinking that the woman and child must mean the eschatological birth of the state of Israel. Meanwhile Gunkel<sup>8</sup> had written again to abandon his view of the chapter's dependence upon early Babylonian literature and to formulate the opinion : that Judaism had adapted and spiritualised the ancient myth of the struggle between darkness and light, which was the creation of the religions of the ancient world, and had seen therein its own religious history and longings for a divine redeemer. This view has gained great support. It is that set forth, for example, by Charles.<sup>9</sup> His commentary at this point is a summary of the views which have been touched in ; therefore, it makes a convenient basis for critical examination.

He divides the chapter into three parts : (1) xii. 1 to 6, 13 to 17, that is the account of the woman

<sup>1</sup> *Schöpfung und Chaos* (1895), 379 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (1904), 86 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Abraxas* (1891), 117 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Das Christenbild des urchristlichen Glaubens* (1903), 38 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (1906), 354 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Die Offenbarung Johannes* (1904), 137.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, ad loc.

<sup>8</sup> *Zum religionsgesch. Verständnis des Neuen Test.* (1903), 55.

<sup>9</sup> *Comm. i.* 314.

and child without the closing sentence of the chapter, "which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus"; (2) xii. 7 to 10, the war of Michael with the dragon; (3) xii. 11 and 12, a redactor's interpolation. The first part is due to the international myth. The second is "an original product of Judaism". Charles traces its features to many sources in pre-Christian Judaism. For him, as for others, the chapter is a torso. It stops where it should not, it is urged. A portion is gone which ought to describe the Messiah's return to destroy the dragon.

With the whole chapter thus firmly thrust into the framework of an adapted myth of a divine redeemer, what was its meaning for the apocalyptist? The ancient figure in the composite myth passes into the Hebrew garb of a Messiah. The woman into the collective person of the "true Israel" or "the community of believers". The woman's crown is possibly mythological and zodiacal. Her array of the sun and "the moon under her feet" is met by what is claimed to be a "remarkable parallel" from the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.<sup>1</sup> Isaac tells his son that he who seizes the sun and the moon will have possession of them. Then it reads, "And when Levi became as a sun, a certain young man gave to him twelve branches of palm; and Judah was bright as the moon: and under their feet were twelve rays". The circumstances of the narrative and the phrasing of this citation from it do not compose even a distant parallel. Moreover the

<sup>1</sup> *Testament of Naphtali*, v. 2 ff.

Hebrew original of the passage does not support the Greek phrasing which is supposed to have literal identity with xii. 1. The Hebrew says that Levi leapt upon the sun by the help of a rod, and Judah upon the moon. The nine brothers each went like riders to a star. But "Joseph alone remained on the earth". The Hebrew tells us how they came into possession of sun and moon and stars, but the Greek does not. The editor of this text remarks upon the inaccuracies of the Greek translator ;<sup>1</sup> and there seems little room for doubt that his criticism holds good. Charles' date for the *Testaments*, which is 100 B.C., almost obliges him to declare for the alleged parallel — as it causes him to assume the most detailed influence of the apocryphon on the text of the whole of the New Testament. This early date is as contestable as the parallel in the light of accumulating evidence.

Before any other details of this analysis are examined, it will be informing to enquire how, for example, a verse of chapter xii is interpreted according to the whole of this analytical view. We will choose verse sixteen because it is a difficult one. It tells how the earth helped the woman against the flood poured out by the dragon. Charles disarms us at the outset by saying that we are "wholly in the dark" as to its original meaning. Those mythological features, whatever they were, "have no longer any significance" we are told. There is not quite the same trouble about what was their meaning

<sup>1</sup> Gaster, *Studies and Texts* (1928), i. 81 ; cf. Charles ed. *Testaments* (1908), lxvi ff. and 221 ff.

in the time of the writing of the *Apocalypse*. If this and the two preceding verses were Christian, it is argued, then they refer to the flight of the early Christians to Pella before Jerusalem fell.<sup>1</sup> If, on the other hand, they are Jewish they tell of the flight of the Jews to Jamnia, the seat of Jewish scholarship after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> To this dilemma of opinion, Charles adds: "In either case verses 14 to 16 are without significance in their present context".<sup>3</sup> This view is not peculiar to that commentator. Others held it before him. It represents the straits to which exegesis is put when the international or composite myth and its Hebrew messianic mutation are accepted.

There are two broad objections to the whole of this view. They arise from the writer and his book. That he is highly gifted no one can doubt. That his intellectual response, beneath his statement and structure which are the signs of those gifts, is direct and simple is as impossible to doubt. What has moved his predecessors in the craft of apocalypticism moves him. His response differs only in its deft brightness of realisation. Even where the Semite is to give way to the Christian in him, the canons of apocalyptic are upheld. It cannot be said too often that unless he did that he could not hope to win the Semitic world. The myth and its alleged mutation, then, are foreign to him. His sense of structure would rebel at the notion of placing in the middle of the book two inharmonious remnants of material,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Rosh Hashanah*, 31a.

<sup>3</sup> *Comm.* i. 332.

which have no connexions with what has gone before or what is to come after them. Up to chapter xi he has used a tissue so fine as almost to be dreamlike. This has been done with such skill that many critics tell us he must have written down what he had seen when in abnormal conditions. The international myth and the war in the sky, as handled by the dominant school of commentators, seem to be like two odd pieces of oriental carpet tacked to that tissue. It is manifest that John did not put this intractable stuff in his twelfth chapter. Since it is the place where he is gathering his powers for the writing of the climax of his book. The woman and the child and the war in the sky ought then to be united with the two halves of the *Apocalypse*, either as the silken union between the two or as the beginning to its second half.

Two other reasons of a particular nature are even more vital objections. The first is that there is a proper source for the incident of the mother and child which hitherto has not been recognised. It fits both the simplicity of John's thoughtful mode of sight, the structure of his book and the demands of apocalyptic. The second reason is that there is also another source by whose help the narrative of the war in the sky, as it is in the *Apocalypse*, can find its harmony with the first source, the contents of the chapter and the whole of John's book.

It has been said that the idea of the Synagogue and its influence on the structure of the *Apocalypse* appears at two places in its second half. The first of these is the prefatory verse to what is marked as

its twelfth chapter and is numbered as the nineteenth verse of the eleventh chapter. This section goes as far as xv. 4 where, in the following verse, the second section begins. Its closing verses are full of song. They who had overcome the Beast make music: "they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb". Evidently that is the end the apocalyptist designed this section to reach. His end will have had a devised beginning. For there is an apocalyptical logic. Commentators seem to have confused that with formal logic. Since they have used the motive in the end of the section to chant the theological unity of the Old and New Testaments or the theological genealogy of the Old and New Israels. These dogmatic views rest on a more slender literal foundation even than the whole of the song's title. For it, annotators can find Old Testament warrant only for the words 'song of Moses' in Deuteronomy xxxii, where is the so-called *Song of Moses*. They go to Joshua xiv. 7 for the words "the servant of God"; which exposes the theological irrelevancy of their methods and of any such conclusions based upon their definitions. Those subjects are, however, outside present discussion; for neither has anything to do with the apocalyptist's beginning and end of this strip of his book. The suggestion then is that a theme concerning Moses and the Lamb began the section which closed with a song about both. The Lamb is openly mentioned in verse eleven, and in a context which looks on to chapter xiv where the Lamb is on mount Zion. We must

turn to the sources to discover the presence of Moses.

The ancient Samaritan book called *Asatir*,<sup>1</sup> which Gaster dates in the third century B.C., contains very much valuable material for the student of the Old Testament writings, both canonical and uncanonical. Its value will be enhanced with a more critical handling of the text and a much fuller commentary. It is a matter for gratitude that a pioneer text has been published. Gaster's sub-title reads, *The Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses*. It is a description which is at once adequate and inadequate. Adequate, because the main design of its writer was to tell about Moses. Inadequate, because the writer has placed him in the context of a 'Life of Adam'. The book is rather a Samaritan redaction of the 'saga of the Man'.<sup>2</sup> This branch of the Jewish race has preserved more of the Folk-history of their great hero than have the Jews. And in that Folk-history our new source is to be found.

First, an analysis is requisite of the salient points of the incident of the woman and child. It has eight features : (1) The woman is arrayed with the splendour of the sky and has a crown of twelve stars upon her head ; (2) her child is about to be

<sup>1</sup> Gaster, ed. 1927. I have been privileged to study the text of *Asatir* in photographs of a native Samaritan copy of the original codex through the generosity of Dr. J. Morgenstern. The copy is in the Library of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. He added further to my obligations to him by sending me also the photograph of an Arabic commentary on the Samaritan text.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gaster, 5 ff. etc., who puts the 'Life of Moses' into the larger context of the 'Life of Adam'.

born ; (3) the dragon is ready to devour the child ; (4) a son is born “ who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron ” ; (5) her child’s life is saved, or in the words of the narrative “ was caught up unto God and unto his throne ”. After the war in the sky the dragon is on earth and he persecutes the woman ; therefore (6) the woman is given eagle’s wings, and she flies into the wilderness to stay there “ a thousand two hundred and threescore days ” ; (7) the dragon attempts to cast water out of his mouth so that its stream may carry her away, but the earth drinks up the water ; (8) in anger, the dragon turns from her “ to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus ”.

From that Samaritan book and an early Samaritan commentary upon it, we gather the following points concerning the birth of Moses : <sup>1</sup> (1) At the time Moses was about to be born Israel’s star was in the sky — thence comes the woman’s planetary regalia ; (2) the soothsayer tells Pharaoh that the death of his child “ will be through water ” and it is recorded further that when Moses was thrown into the river the water subsided, or as the ancient Samaritan commentator has it “ the water stopped by the will of God, and its flow abated beyond measure and the waters diminished . . . at the time when the river was in full tide ” ; (3) the child who should be born will be “ the Master of all mankind ”, or again “ the heaven and earth will

<sup>1</sup> The analysis is composed thus : (1) *Asatir*, viii. 32, *Pitron*, xii. 32 ; (2) *A.* viii. 35, ix. 2 ; (3) *P.* xii. 31 ; (4) *P.* 98-9.



hearken to his word ". Pharaoh as a consequence decrees the death of all male children. The Samaritan source informs us (4) when a male child was born he was "left in the field in charge of the Creator ". For food God "suckled him [*i.e.* Moses] with honey from the rock and fatness from the flinty rock ", which is of course a direct citation of Deuteronomy xxxii. 13, the *Song of Moses*, in our Samaritan source. From that Hebrew source comes the 'wilderness' of the *Apocalypse*, it should be noted, in place of the Samaritan 'field'. It says God "found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness ; He compassed him about, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye " (Deut. xxxii. 10). That is a complete series of textual reasons for the change made by the apocalypticist when he wrote "her child was caught up unto God and unto his throne" instead of the Samaritan "left it in the field in the charge of the Creator ". (5) The Samaritan source has no parallel for the escape of the woman on eagle's wings ; but the *Song* has, for there God "spread abroad his wings, he bare them on his pinions". That feature of the incident where the woman is menaced by a flood from the dragon is, as anyone can see, a turning of the same weapon upon her as was threatened against her child. There can be no doubt that what is preserved of this story in Samaritan was also known in Hebrew. The unsuspected influence of the *Song of Moses* in chapter xii, and as yielding details of the Lawgiver's life, enables us to make that conclusion. Our Samaritan

source would not have quoted the *Song* except the story and it were related together in the Folk-mind. Thus it has passed into the saga of *the Man*, that essential inspiration of Jewish apocalyptic. Moreover the discovery of the part that the *Song of Moses* has therein, and of its part in the forming of the text of *Apocalypse* xii, yields the verbal support of an actual source even for John's designation of the song, "the Song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb" in this section of his book. Vindication for the place of these details of Moses' birth in the Folk-saga—the wilderness, the slaughter of male children by Nimrod and the feeding by God—is found in the story, for example, of Abraham's birth. It is a reduplication of Moses' story, as indeed it ought to be if both of them are in the line of *the Man*<sup>1</sup>—and the whole story is in the saga of the 'Sons of the Man'.

This Folk-history from the Tradition lends an inner harmony to the chapter and its connexions with the rest of the book which cannot be gained in any other manner. The Deuteronomic *Song of Moses* contributes its literal service—to the text of chapter xii, at the beginning of this section of the *Apocalypse*—a very different order of service than that which must be presupposed by the dogmatic views already referred to. It is a changed "song of Moses" which harmonises with the "song of the Lamb" at its close. We must notice how delicately the change is made. The earth drinks up the water which is sent against the woman.

<sup>1</sup> Jellinek, i. 25 ff.; Gaster, *Asatir*, 26.

The dragon leaves the mother of Moses "to war against the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus". It is the same fine use of the historic sense as the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* exhibits in his chapters xi and xii. It is also the same exquisite tact and taste, those most true servants of winsome truth, towards the Semitic world. Charles well said "there is no counterpart to it in the international myth". And there can be no wonder, since this verse and the whole chapter in which it comes are used by commentators as is a face in a misty mirror, for he goes on to remark: "from which many of the chief features of the chapter are ultimately derived"<sup>1</sup> It will serve no useful purpose to wander in discussion after other theories, concerning source and significance, which lead to a multiplicity of sources<sup>2</sup> or to supposed controversies between Pharisees and Zealots.<sup>3</sup> John did not and could not divagate into thick clouds in that fashion. He is as direct here as elsewhere in his use of the Tradition of apocalyptic, and is as simply true to the structure of his book. The Semite and the Christian in him chime together to achieve the ends of the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*.

Is there any way of demonstrating that the war in the sky harmonises with a chapter which has such a beginning and end? The *Epistle of Jude* in its ninth verse preserves an incident in the recognised 'history' of Moses, when it records how

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.*, *ad loc.* xii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Comm.* i. 310 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Wellhausen, *Analyse der Offenbarung Johannis* (1907), 19.

Michael the archangel fought Satan for the body of Moses when it had died. Verses seven to ten in chapter xii of the *Apocalypse* surely preserve the other end of the story: how Michael fought the dragon, one of whose names was Satan, when Moses was a child and was being "cared for" by the divine One (according to Deuteronomy) or who was "caught up unto God" (according to the *Apocalypse*). Moses, in Semitic belief, was to be deathless. Therefore the dragon whose master-name is Death had to be overthrown at the time of his birth. John records the deed, and unites it with the triumph of those servants of his who have immortal life through belief in the revelation of Jesus. That war in the sky may not be looked at from the level of Milton or Shakespeare; but from the more intimate level of the Semitic Folk-history of Moses, its unity with the fundamentals of apocalyptic and the structure of the *Apocalypse*. Once again, it is shown that if this chapter is relieved of the thick and multi-coloured fog of the international myth, the apocalypticist is able to manifest his simple and thoughtful loyalties, to the Tradition of his craft and to his Lord. Their illumination will lead us home to his meaning everywhere.

There arises from what has been found another note of his workmanship. It may be called its secular contemporaneity. What has been and is can rub shoulders in an apocalypse. There is no reason for saying of such a writing, 'to that point is one century; and from that we leap four centuries'. The Tradition upon which an apocalypticist

draws is timeless, and therefore always contemporaneous. A Semite would know that, even if we do not. Apocalyptic had always its sense of annual renewal and was always looking onwards. This alphabetic reflection is necessary as we pick up one more thread of chapter xii and carry it over to chapter xiii. In the former the dragon is called "the old serpent; Devil; Satan; the deceiver of the inhabited earth"; and in the latter are two strange surrogates of his. In the former catalogue the centuries of nomenclature clash. Thus, too, formal embodiments seem to clash. For instance, serpent and Satan. They are made to do so by the commentators.<sup>1</sup> Impulses, external to the *Apocalypse* and apocalyptic, are responsible for such views. For the Tradition of apocalyptic, the plastic forms are one; from ancient Subartu down to John's time. And so is the idea one within the varied nominal forms. The dragon can change his name and skin; and apocalyptically he is always the same. The *Apocalypse* makes it most clear that he is Death, whenever and wherever he appears. For apocalyptic it is an almost idle question to ask what cult significance the seven-headed monster had in Subartu. It would be of value for our knowledge of Subaraic religion to know that. The apocalyptist, however, has use for the strange Subaraic form that he might give it content from his Tradition. Daniel in his way does the same as John. The reference to a crowned figure or a false prophet is the sign of the secular contemporaneity of the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Comm.* i. 326.

animal form. Either of those persons, who are cryptically glanced at, only connote Death. They are his instruments. John is really saying that they would be always present, if it were not for the revelation of Jesus Christ. But we must not anticipate: we must follow an ordered way.

Do the two beasts of chapter xiii conform to this view? John is frank concerning the origin and the relations of both. The first comes "up out of the sea", and the second "up out of the earth". Both of them have authority from the dragon. The first is unnamed; the second is called Hades. The place of the dead is beneath or in a series of hollows in the earth, according to Semitic ideas. Its personal or animal form is a factor in apocalyptic. Then the embodied place of the dead and Death are nearer in relationship than father and son. This creature is not of Graeco-Hebrew descent, as if his progenitors were a Greek and a Hebrew. He is as Semitic in the *Apocalypse* as in the *Odes of Solomon*. Thus the Odist writes: "Sheol saw me and was stricken"; or again, "and Sheol hath been exterminated by my word". It is instructive to recall that, according to the *Odes*, the dragon with seven heads was killed by destroying his "evil poison" — that is his cult message of death. For they who listen to the revelation of Jesus arise from the place of the dead,<sup>1</sup> as several of his songs record. These two beasts are here seen in their radical connexions. The Subaraism of the beast out of the earth, as to form, is indubitable. The writer has chosen this

<sup>1</sup> *Odes*, 42. 15; 15. 9; 22. 5 ff.

particular animal for the " horns like unto a lamb ". His opposition to the Lamb is evident. Up to this point, both beasts are of the veritable order of apocalyptic animal forms. Their unity in significance, as the disseminators of death, is an essential reason for the choice of them by the apocalypticist. The choice approves itself to the Semite and the Christian in him.

It is to be feared that the disproportionate interest which has been shown to the latter creature has not been caused by the deeper interest in apocalyptic. His name and nature, and the writer's use of these, are passed over to seek the meaning of a number and another name. Upon a faulty text has been raised a museum of lay figures, ranging from Caligula to certain politicians of the twentieth century. The doubt whether xiii. 18 was in the original text — which is allowed by many critics — is disallowed by the majority of writers so that they might make a small library of books to turn those words and the *Apocalypse* into Roman history. Even if the verse is claimed for the original, it is more than questionable, as Lohmeyer<sup>1</sup> has said, that there could be any reference to successions of Roman emperors or Persian satraps in those verses of chapter xvii which describe the beast and are made to refer to chapter xiii. It is the reflexive exegesis of the seventeenth which causes a Neronian invasion of the thirteenth chapter. A spectral Nero, and not the historic emperor : a posthumous shade who is said to haunt a Parthian legend — he it is who is

<sup>1</sup> Pg. 142.

made to steal through this portion of the *Apocalypse*. Indeed certain exegetes commit themselves<sup>1</sup> to the opinion, "this expectation of a Parthian invasion of the West is explicitly stated in xvi. 2". According to this view the invaders are said to be advancing along the dry bed of the Euphrates. The sense of humour appears to be lacking in the commentators. For had they that excellent gift, they would not burden John with what they call 'prophecies' of such a nature nor expect a cataclysmic connivance on the part of Geography to make them come true. The chief support alleged for that spectral story is in the *Sibylline Oracles*.<sup>2</sup> There it is said to have joined itself with "the eschatology of Hellenistic Judaism". It is no concern of ours whether this is correct interpretation or not of the *Oracles*. They are not the *Apocalypse*. And a discussion of the marriage of the legend with any claimed phase of Judaic eschatology with a Greek complexion has as little importance for the book and its meanings. But it is very important that some other confirmation should be found, than that which is offered by German and English scholarship, for this Neronic and Parthian investment of the *Apocalypse*, if it is to be accepted; or better that fresh evidence should be presented for the extrusion of this spectre and his marauders. Not another vestige of evidence can be found for that position, except stronger assertion of its interpretative rightness. There is, on the other hand, gathering evidence for the expulsion

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Comm.* ii. 81.

<sup>2</sup> v. 143-8, 361-4, and iv. 119 ff., 137-9.



of Nero, whether in or out of the body, from the *Apocalypse*.

We must turn again to the beast "out of the earth". One other quality of Sheol has to be examined. "He spake like a dragon" is the usual rendering of the statement under question. The accepted Greek text here has no article before the word 'dragon'. Perhaps the writer treated the term as one of the names of the bestial primary. We have seen that he sometimes writes names without articles, or that the present text so records him. Let the article be added, the troubles for the apocalypticist are not over. What can he have meant? is the next question. The reference is said to be of two sorts; either he meant that the beast speaks in the deceitful manner of the serpent in the garden, and that would make the problem a Greek one; or the linguistic difficulty is more deep-seated, and is to be traced to a supposed Hebrew under-text. Then the words ought to read, 'but he was a destroyer like the dragon'.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the *Apocalypse* thrusts its own simple explanation upon us. The phrase means what it says. Sheol would speak like Death. The two who are as forms of one another could not be less closely related in message. The question of article or no article has already been dealt with. So many ancient and modern problems started in the *Apocalypse* have their rise in the commentator's inability to keep its ideas or language within the sphere of the writer's craft.

If then it be according to the canons of apoca-

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Comm.* i. 358.

lyptic that with an appearance of the chariot-throne a recognised series of natural judgements should be made; it is also in accord with the same authority that when a chief animal form makes its appearance its horns may be apocalyptically crowned, and this be only a feature of apocalyptical realism which has no dynastic reference. Another reason will be found by turning to the beast which came "out of the sea".

This one had ten crowned horns and seven heads, "and upon his heads names of blasphemy". The animal would be too versatile if on one part of his anatomy he bore the signs of kingships and satrapies, and on another seven perversions of apocalyptical crowns. There is abundant evidence to show that, according to Jewish apocalyptic, the pattern of this beast was crowned with Jahvistic names. His powers to do and speak come from them. This piece of the *Apocalypse* exhibits plainly that the surrogate of Death was crowned with such names perverted for his aggrandisement. Both these and the crowns on the horns belong to the Tradition. His true name is Leviathan. He is the menace of Death in the sea. An adjunct of the ancient Semitic idea of the cosmos, he was given apocalyptical form in the region of the Khabar. His name and significance, however, did not come thence; nor from ancient Persia as is sometimes conjectured.<sup>1</sup> The Ras Shamra tablets speak of 'the mighty one with the seven heads' and call him by his name 'Levia-

<sup>1</sup> That view is required as little, for Leviathan in apocalyptic, as that of his supposed Egyptian ancestry; for criticism of that view see Cheyne, *Ency. Biblica*, s.v. 'Behemoth'.

than '.<sup>1</sup> It will be fully shown, in its proper place, that the cosmic idea and this feature come into the possession of historic Israel through Phoenicia. We shall see later more of the truth of Phoenician agency in a surprising context.

A decisive argument for the nature and significance of the three beasts can be found in a cardinal aim of the structure of the *Apocalypse*. It cannot be doubted, for it is most patent, that the writer had aimed from the beginning of his work to present a new cosmos: sky and earth and "no more sea". That refers to something other than the glassy or crystalline sea. Any other view would not be a sensible one. Death and Sheol are buried by him with surpassing energy. Leviathan has gone in a touch of surpassing artistry. We shall study both energy and artistry at length. The necessity at this moment is to realise that the three creatures are essentially demanded—as Death, Sheol, and Leviathan with their common message against life for man—by the two phases of John's mind, Semitic and Christian, and also by the basic structure of his book.

From chapter xiv to the end of the *Apocalypse*, John seems complete master over the medium of apocalyptic. That is an external impression of his work. Since here the Semite and the Christian are in more explicit co-operation than in any other portion of his book. Its climax or climaxes demand that he should play no self-exhibiting part. His

<sup>1</sup> Virolleaud, *Note complémentaire sur le poème de Môt et Aliën (Syria, 1931)*, 356 ff.

medium and rubric of structure must create and time it or them. Still no reader can be untouched by the sense of the ends of the apocalypticist's work when he finds himself led by the Lamb into the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The reference to the city in chapter xi seems an apocalyptically casual one by the side of chapter xiv. The reason for this impression is that the throb of the overthrow of the Woman in purple is to be felt in the latter chapter. But it is not felt as it might be. An incredible scribal blunder has been allowed to obscure the dramatism of the text. We read, concerning the ideal congregation gathered on mount Zion, "these are they which are not defiled with women; for they are virgins". Down to Lohmeyer,<sup>1</sup> the commentators mark these words as having to do with 'a sexual ethic'. Some rise against the passage and ascribe it to monkish interpolation<sup>2</sup> — which is saying the same thing in another and more violent manner. Now two great Coptic versions, the Sahidic and the Bohairic, together with the Ethiopic and a number of important Greek cursives read, "with the Woman".<sup>3</sup> The first five verses of this chapter should cause any reader to understand that the virginity of the ideal congregation is in their assent to the revelation of Jesus, and not in physical celibacy. They are the opposites of those who "commit fornication with her" — that is with the city. This is a reiterated subject in chapter xviii. Its evidence may not be discounted; since the chapter has interpretative value for much

<sup>1</sup> Pg. 120.<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Comm. ad loc.*<sup>3</sup> Hoskier, ii. 371.

more in the *Apocalypse* than its fellow-chapter concerning the Woman in purple. No lie is on their lips. That is their blameless condition. "They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

Moreover this emendation is demanded by the structure and thought of the *Apocalypse*. This is a vital consideration which must sway a future editor of its text in more than one place; and that gives a fresh value to the evidence of certain of the textual versions. As to this most needed emendation we are engaged upon, the swift succession of incidents which follow upon that in which it has been made ought to be enough to establish it in the text: the angel with an "eternal gospel"; the haunting cry of "Fallen is Babylon" and the warring against the worship of the beast. They are flashings forwards of structure and thought to the war and the downfall of the Woman in purple. It is that last appearance and disappearance of the Woman which dominates John's mind; and which in turn defines the people and things that are for or against the coming of the "new Jerusalem".

Before we come to those controlling incidents, the apocalypticist's loyalty to his rubric of structure must be noted. There are two instructive illustrations in the closing verses of this chapter. The *Son of the Man* comes again. In his hand is a sickle. A voice cries, "Send forth thy sickle and reap". The harvest of the earth is reaped by the casting of the sickle upon it. A second cry goes up, "Send forth thy sickle and gather the clustered grapes of the vines of the earth". Again the

sickle is cast upon the earth. The grapes are cut and cast into the winepress of God. We have seen how aware John is of the little apocalypses in the synagogal Lectionary for the festivals of Pentecost and Tabernacles, though his own book is timed by the Day of the latter feast. In these verses of chapter xiv his loyalty can be seen to the combined use of those two festivals. They offer as well candid illustration of how festal factors, like the harvesting of wheat and the gathering of grapes, can be given apocalyptic significance. The dramatic and judicial metaphor springs naturally from the facts of the festivals. It as naturally takes on actual life in event and judgement for the Folk-mind. The apocalypticist is that mind made articulate. Some commentators have endeavoured to excise verses fifteen to seventeen on the count that they have been interpolated by a scribe who has imitated the author of the *Apocalypse*.<sup>1</sup> Whatever can be said of the Greek text at this point will not cast out the original necessity for those verses in the structure of the book. When judgements are to be made they must issue directly from fitting apocalyptic agents. Hence there are these repetitions in the *Apocalypse*. They should not be looked upon as literary approaches to magical practices: that is the need for the repetition of potent formulae and the like. They conform to the classical modes of apocalyptic. John has another reason for the repeated usage, and that is the demands of his book's structure.

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Charles, *Comm.* ii. 21.

The *Apocalypse* moves on to its great war. The account in chapter xvi takes us to the gathering together of the opposing forces : that in chapter xix to the war between them. If the two are allowed to interpret one another, the sort of war that went on and even the problem of its field can be discovered. If they are kept apart, a spectral Nero and Parthian horde, or any others who may be chosen from Rome to Peking, will throng the pages of the *Apocalypse*. A fresh adventure with the sixteenth verse of chapter xvi is the most striking and probably satisfactory way with the two narratives. "And they gathered them together into the place called in Hebrew Har-Magedon." The exegetical history of the struggle with that name does not concern us. Its curious residue is in the writings of recent commentators. They keep the name in its entirety. Therefore the chief problem for them is to explain it. They conclude that it means there must have been a mountain-war. The transliterated Hebrew is said to mean "mountain of Megiddo". A comparison with Daniel yields the rendering "a holy mountain", and that is said to mean mount Zion.<sup>1</sup> Another attempt renders the name as "fruitful mount".<sup>2</sup> By a process akin with legerdemain these renderings are brought together so as to yield a mountain in the region of Jerusalem. But a mountain-war seems scarcely to fit the account in the *Apocalypse*. Therefore Gunkel<sup>3</sup> advanced

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Charles, *Comm.* ii. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Cheyne, *Ency. Biblica*, i. 311.

<sup>3</sup> 263 ff.

the theory that there is in it a dim survival of an ancient myth of a conflict of the gods. Bousset<sup>1</sup> conjectured a variant form of the myth. A holy mountain is assailed by demons and evil spirits. The author of the *Apocalypse* took the fading memory of this myth and gave it a lease of historical life, by associating it with the descent of the Parthians on Rome. It will be better to study manuscripts of the book than to follow after spectres.

Hoskier<sup>2</sup> has done this before us. In the course of his invaluable examination of extant manuscripts of the *Apocalypse*, he has taken into account a most interesting one kept in a library on mount Athos. This manuscript excises the words "called in the Hebrew Har-Magedon" of xvi. 16. In their place it gives two Greek words τῶν ὀδῶν. The two omegas in the second word are clear, as the photograph of the folio shows.<sup>3</sup> Hoskier is inclined to two ways of looking at this reading. He desires either to emend it so as to read ὀδίνων, in keeping with Mt. xxiv. 8, Mk. xiii. 8, and Acts ii. 24 — and then translates the whole verse: "and they gathered them together into the place of travail"; or to keep the Greek as it stands and render the phrase "place of the songs" or "minstrels". He finds some possible support for this view in an early Greek scholium to xiv. 15 which describes the angel's voice as "heavenly" when pronouncing a message of judgement. Hoskier leaves the problem with the remark

<sup>1</sup> *Ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Hoskier, i. 443, ii. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Hoskier, *Manuscripts of the Apocalypse* (*Bulletin Rylands Library*, 1924), Pl. pg. 236.



that the phrase in the manuscript " remains a most curious expression ".

It has been said that this manuscript quite clearly shows the two omegas in the word  $\omega\delta\omega\nu$ . Let it be supposed that the scribal eye has carried on one of them from the article  $\tau\omega\nu$ . Then let the noun be read with an omicron,  $\omicron\delta\omega\nu$ . The verse could be rendered: " and they gathered them together into the place of the Ways ". The last word must of course be written with a capital letter; and thus brought into line with a technical Hebrew and Greek word for a scheme of religious or moral ideas.<sup>1</sup> The *Apocalypse* is definite that the protagonist on one side is the Word of God out of whose mouth proceeds the sword of His revelation. It is equally definite that Death and his hordes oppose him; and already it has been shown that this name refers to such cults as are in opposition to the revelation, and so bring death to men and women. These opponents do represent the conflict of the Ways.

It is appropriate to recall the opening sentence of the *Didache*, " There are two ways, one of Life and one of Death ". The first heads a scheme of ideas drawn from the revelation of Jesus; and the second another which is exactly alike to that scheme of practices excluded from the ' new Jerusalem ' in xxi. 8 and xxii. 15. It has become the increasing practice to say that the *Didache* borrowed the ' Two Ways ' from Barnabas.<sup>2</sup> May it not be more truly

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22; *Jubilees*, xliii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache* (1920); Muilen-

said that both he and that little treatise borrowed where John got his idea and its connotations — that is on the one side, the Tradition of apocalyptic ; and on the other, the revelation of Jesus Christ ?

That there is a War of the Two Ways in the *Apocalypse* is beyond doubt. That a war would be apocalyptically fought in a book timed by the Day of Tabernacles is predetermined by the festal Lection, Zechariah xiv. 2, if by nothing else in the Tradition : “ For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem ”. The Semite in John responds to that inspiration ; the Christian in him to the call of the Revealer. This apocalyptist will have no interest in the shade of Nero and the myth of Parthians led by a ghost. Where then, it should be asked, did John conceive such a battle could be fought ? ‘ The place of the Ways ’ is on no terrestrial map. Was this conflict which is dealt with so realistically to take place after all on some unearthly apocalyptical plane ? Once more the ancient versions of the text of the *Apocalypse* enjoin us to listen to them. The Sahidic version<sup>1</sup> has the reading ‘ war ’ instead of ‘ place ’ in this verse. Τόπος could be among the stars as well as anywhere in Palestine. With the accretions gone, the site of the battle is the city under judgement. The necessity and truth of this view is upheld by the structure and text of the *Apocalypse*. We should consider, therefore, that the demands of the versions sometimes outweigh the witness of no matter how

berg, *The Literary Relations of the Epistle of Barnabas and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (1929) ; Connolly, *The Didache in relation to the Epistle of Barnabas*, J.T.S. (1932), 237 ff.

<sup>1</sup> Hoskier, ii. 433, again from Horner.

many manuscripts which retain inept and misleading readings. Our problem now is to discover, whether John could have meant his 'Way of Death' to cover contemporary oriental religion or the imperial cult of Rome? An answer to it can be found only as the subject of the city in the guise of the Woman in purple is reinvestigated.

This may seem at first an unnecessary piece of work. For there is no point upon which modern commentators have so much agreed as that the city of chapter xvii is Rome. Charles, for instance, writes with unquestioning emphasis this dictum, "the harlot is the city of Rome". There is a case for the beast as embodying the Roman cult of the emperor, if that judgement be true. Habit has certainly made it so. The physical fact of seven hills in the vicinity of Rome; snatches of Virgil concerning them and a single verse in the first of the Petrine Epistles — which is claimed as giving the city her other name of Babylon — may incline us to a sort of irritation against the matter being called into question. This feeling may go a little further and cause many to look upon the description "Woman in purple" as being pedantic. To this small point there is the answer, that she was purple before she was scarlet, if care is taken with the text. Also that it is best to keep the text of the *Apocalypse* free from the anachronisms clustering in the widely accepted conception of the "Scarlet Woman". That was born long after the date of the *Apocalypse*. We need sometimes to remind ourselves of that fact. Whether or no the apocalyptist meant Rome in chapter xvii,

it is certain that he is not thinking of anything which might occur in the history of the later Church of Italy. Such reflections do not constitute a case for reinvestigation. That necessity is found solely by patient thought upon the commentators' treatment of the text and interpretation of John's book.

We will consider, first, what they say about the literary make-up of chapter xvii ; second, what they say about the condemned city ; third, what they say about the relations of chapter xviii with its predecessor. First, the chapter is composed from two sources. A Semitic one which is behind verses 1c, 2, 3b to 6, 7, 18, and 8 to 10. A non-Semitic source which is behind verses 11 to 13, 17 and 16. The immediate way with their views will be to sum up what has been left out of the received text by the analysis. To reconstruct the Semitic source there is omitted : the angels with the bowls and the carrying of the apocalypticist by the Spirit into the desert. Whilst the closing verse of the chapter is brought to a place between verses seven and eight : that is who the Woman was is made to follow the statement, " I will tell thee the mystery of the woman ". The non-Semitic source, it is said, ought to have matter added to rather than taken from it. It is supposed to be fragmentary, and before verse eleven (which tells of " the beast that was and is not ") should come an account of the seven heads (that is the subject with which the Semitic source ends in verse ten). Both omissions from and in the text of the *Apocalypse* point to a Christian redactor ; that is to say, to the work of John. Next, it should be observed that

these two sources are said to have been handled by John so that they might yield a temporal reference to Titus. The Semitic source thus finding its point in the seventh beast "who is going into perdition": that is Titus the destroyer of Jerusalem. The non-Semitic one finding its point in Titus as the cover to the demonic Nero's foray from Parthia. As an aid to these conclusions the hatred of the Jews for Titus is called in; and it is imagined that this passion finds its expression in the fate of the emperor and of his city.

The sole feature of this analysis which authenticates itself is the moving up of the last verse so that it follows verse seven. For it can be shown that what is original in chapter xvii is a unity, and of John's authorship. What seems not to be his are the weak verses, fifteen to seventeen — the main interpretative motive of which is in flat contradiction with chapter xviii. 9 to 10. Chapter xviii is in more than one sense John's comment upon or extension of chapter xvii. It must be granted its commentatorial rights, if such they might be called. The apocalyptical unity is thus made out. That type of unity includes both meaning and words. Put in another fashion, the details of this portion of the *Apocalypse* must respond to the things the apocalyptist has in mind, his craft and the design of his book. This subject arises after we have seen what the commentators say about the city and chapter xviii.

The affirmation is secular that the city, which is also the Woman in purple, is Rome. Everybody's

brother, the man in Eastern and Western streets, is said to know as much as that about the *Apocalypse*. What he of the West and East does not know is that the commentators have difficulties with John's description of the city, if the city he depicts is Rome. He sees her "sitting on many waters". They tell us that "Rome cannot rightly be described" as being thus situated. She has only the Tiber and the distant sea. To overcome this difficulty an Old Testament chapter is sought in which something like the phrase "sitting on the waters" occurs, and in a chapter where a prophet is inveighing against Babylon. Jeremiah li. 13 is chosen. It should be noticed that the prophet is speaking against the city of that name. That this difficulty with the site of Rome is an ancient one is proclaimed, they tell us, by the gloss of xvii. 15; where an early annotator of the *Apocalypse* has tried to explain away the "many waters" by saying that the phrase means "many peoples". Another reason for the presence of this description is said to be ancient myth. Certain hold that the original source had to do with the Abyss and Tiamat. John will have misunderstood this in part and rehandled it in part. The result is a page of the history of Rome.

Concerning chapter xviii, it will serve much more than our purpose to record three assertions of the commentators. The first is that the chapter was written in the time of Vespasian. The second, that it was a part of the Semitic source which is claimed to be the basis of the first half of chapter xvii. The third illustrates how features are dealt

with which are hard to fit into the date laid down for the writing of the *Apocalypse*, that is A.D. 95. The second verse is an example. It speaks of the city as "fallen" and become "a prison of every unclean spirit". The commentators say that could not refer to Rome of John's date. He is then seeing the fate of the city in a vision, and writes of it as one of the great acts in the judgement of the world. When the second verse is thus looked at the third verse is said to be irreconcilable with it. The third tells of the evil deeds of kings and merchants in the city. Therefore we have here the jostling together of two different dates in her history: the second verse is to be dated in Vespasian's time and the third in John's time. There is found also two literary modes in the same short space: in the second verse the visionary and in the third the historical mode. Another illustrative phase of this last point is to be seen in their way with the third clause in the twenty-third verse, "for thy merchants were the princes of the earth". We are told it was culled from Isaiah xxiii. 8, "whose merchants are princes". The comment follows, "there is no ground for saying that God destroyed Rome because its merchants were the great ones of the earth".<sup>1</sup> Thus commentators make John a prophet of the first century to prove him in the wrong if he does not agree with what theories of the twentieth century contend he ought to have said.

A method must be followed which will lead us

<sup>1</sup> The course of criticism with xvii-xviii is best studied in Charles, *Comm.*, *ad loc.*

to the heart of the problems set by these views of sources, of the city and of chapter xviii. This method suggests the challenging question: is it true that the city of chapters xvii and xviii is Rome? It is the *Apocalypse* itself which presents that question rather than any line of criticism of the commentaries upon the book. Its final pages are lit with the beauty of the "new Jerusalem". Do not they presuppose an 'old Jerusalem'? Turn, for one moment, to one of the apocalyptist's sources of inspiration, the synagogal Lectionary and the apocalypse for the Day of Tabernacles. What is its chief burden but the 'old' and 'new' Jerusalem? Among the grape-vines a Jerusalem, ideal in its ritual service, is seen to take the place of the old city. Or turn the pages of Ezekiel who has contributed an apocalypse to the Day of Pentecost. The book which bears his name closes with the apocalyptical series of chapters xl to xlviii, and in them is planned in place of the ancient city a new priestly Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The remarkable craftsman who gave us the *Apocalypse* did not put merely a pale prelude to the magnificent close of his book in the paragraph that is the opening of chapter xi; and then filled in the space between it and his close with the apocalyptical pageantry of Rome. John's sense of structure would have prevented him from such artistic disloyalty. That opening portion is

<sup>1</sup> Mowinckel, *Ezra den Skriftlaerde* (1916), 125 ff. designates these chapters 'deutero-Ezekiel'. Were they not originally a Festal document? One written for Pentecost? Is this what Josephus meant, *Ant.* x. 5. 1, when he says Ezekiel wrote two books?



prelusive of chapter xiv, and it in turn of chapters xvii and xviii.

The apocalyptist is ruled everywhere by his own rubric in chapter i. The Day of his *Apocalypse* is the Day of Tabernacles. And as with his fellow-craftsmen so also with John, the glory of that Day is the coming of the perfect city in the place of the old and imperfect one. Even ordinary men and women in the Semitic world, at times of high festival, saw on the margins of the fields of corn and the vine-yards, and above their human desire for rain, a white glory of temple roofs and city walls. It was the inalienable dream and majestic motive of Jewish apocalyptic. But is there any evidence in chapters xvii and xviii themselves that their city and Woman in purple was Jerusalem?

It will be recalled that the text of chapter xvii is to be treated as it stands, that is as a unity. The two small differences in the arrangement of its matter being: (1) the placing of verse eighteen after verse seven; (2) the possible omission of verses fifteen to seventeen as forming a rather aimless or perplexed addition to the chapter. The text of chapter xviii, with some small readjustments of a few clauses — a necessity which was indicated as far back as Beza — stands as it is in the received text. We will gather, first, four pieces of description of the city and its site. It sits on many waters; it has a wilderness near by; it is close to the Abyss and the Woman sitteth on seven mountains. The tyro in Palestinian topography could murmur 'what an impossible Jerusalem'; when these four points

are presented to him. He would be wrong. His Jerusalem is on an Ordnance Survey map. Whereas John had been working according to the topography of apocalyptic. He too had been controlled by the designed structure of his book.

We have seen what a place the Semitic idea of the cosmos has in his plan. One of its great features we have not yet dwelt upon: it is that beneath the cupola is gathered the waters of the earth. Where that cupola raises itself is the 'Centre' of the world. Who does not remember how Ezekiel<sup>1</sup> says that this is Jerusalem's other name? Or how Josephus<sup>2</sup> plainly says that Jerusalem is the 'Centre'? Thence flow the four rivers which water the world. Both Hebrew<sup>3</sup> and Arabic<sup>4</sup> evidence is copious on the subject of Jerusalem as "sitting on many waters". We will choose two pieces from the Arabic side. On the authority of Mahomet himself we are told: "all rivers and clouds and mists and rain-bearing winds come from the holy Rock in Jerusalem".<sup>5</sup> Now the Rock is the centre of the world's 'Centre'. Again, another authority tells us that when rain was wanted by Israelites, who were away from Jerusalem, they made a model of the city and directed their prayers towards it, and unceasing rain would fall.<sup>6</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> xxxviii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Bell. Jud.* iii. 3. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Feuchtwang, *Das Wasseroffer und die damit verbundenen Zeremonien*, 1911; Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology* (1930), 16 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Wensinck, 32 f.

<sup>5</sup> Nuwayri, *Nihayatu al-Arab*, 90 (Wensinck, 33).

<sup>6</sup> Al-Hanbali, *Kitabu al-Ins al-Djalil*, i. 214 (Wensinck, 32).

evidence could be multiplied many times over. The phrase of description "sitting on many waters" is not of another Venice, which fits neither Rome nor Jerusalem; but of a city founded on the world's 'Centre', the Folk-watershed of the earth. That description could never have been made of Rome; but there is a mass of evidence to prove that it belongs to Jerusalem. For the moment, we go on to the other three descriptive points.

The seer is taken to a desert near the city. Surely no one can forget the desert whereto the scapegoat was sent from Jerusalem unto Azazel. It is on the map of apocalyptic.<sup>1</sup> It thrusts its storied gloom into the most solemn of Jewish festivals,<sup>2</sup> and by its associations enrobes them with certain primitive material of apocalypses. This desert was bound to be on the apocalypticist's map of Jerusalem.

What of the Abyss? Theology is responsible for putting the place of the dead anywhere but near to Jerusalem. It was soon forgotten that it was originally a portion of the Semitic cosmic 'Centre'. In the earliest part of the *Books of Enoch*<sup>3</sup> it is placed in a ravine made by one of the flanks of the mount of Olives. The Talmud<sup>4</sup> has more valuable information than this: "the place of the dead", it tells us, "has three gates; one in the desert, another in the sea and the third in Jerusalem". The city and the desert here find another

<sup>1</sup> E.g. *Targum* (Jerus.) to Lev. xvi. 10 ff.; *Eth. Enoch*. x. 4, eds. Charles and Martin, *ad loc.*; also Beer in Kautzsch, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, ii. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Yoma*, 6. 3.

<sup>3</sup> xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Erubin*, 19a.

bond of union. What is the significance of the sea is a matter for later discussion. The representative evidence, so far offered, can have reference to no other city than Jerusalem. It is composed of facets and flashes from apocalyptic and Semitic cosmology with their unbroken connexions with the 'Centre' of the world. These two are the draughtsmen that drew the map which was in the mind of John.

The fourth piece of description also was a characteristic of Jerusalem as apocalyptical eyes saw her. Immediately before the passage just cited from the *Books of Enoch* are two short chapters about the seven mountains.<sup>1</sup> These mountains were not at first Jerusalemic. They were northerners, and in the region of old Phoenicia. The Enochist has them there. He also touches in the fact that they would be transferred to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Where the 'throne of Jahweh', which is another name for the heart of the 'Centre', with the 'Tree of Life' goes, there the seven mountains attend. They must do so; for they are the pillars of the septuple scheme of the cosmos — a variant, as we have seen, on the single cupola conception. Nothing is more sure in evidence than this that these mountains and the whole complex of cosmic and cult ideas were transferred to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Mecca, for example, became another and later 'Centre'; and again by the same mode of transference. Then *Enoch* was not uttering pro-

<sup>1</sup> xxiv-xxv.

<sup>2</sup> The evidence will be given in my book on the origins of Jewish apocalyptic.

phency ; he was recording Folk-belief much older than himself. We are dealing here, as before, with the map of Palestinian religion. Its mountains are not less volatile than its waters. They move to do " their priestly work " at the bidding of the Folk-mind. There is nothing eccentric about their movements ; for behind them is the history of a peoples' pilgrimage, their hopes and the building of their shrines. The fact that such spiritual burthens had come to Jerusalem through Phoenicia is the most natural help we could petition for, if we are to comprehend why the apocalyptist put the material he has into chapter xviii and shaped the material of chapter xvii as he did.

It was said a while ago that chapter xviii is in some sense John's own interpretation of chapter xvii. The word ' interpretation ' has a very formal meaning ; and its use may stiffen the material so that it is no longer apocalyptical. Hence we must use the word with very light touch. An apocalypse should never interpret. That is why, for instance, the phrase in chapter xi, " which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt ", or " Gomorrah " with some manuscripts, ought to be struck out of the text. It is doing what an apocalyptist ought not to do. It is almost like an intruded caption. It has that sort of stiffness. Voices can be used. They may speak antiphonally or chorally ; answer to one another, drop away with irregular silences or gather themselves to chant the praises of the *Amen* of the *Apocalypse*. As they rise and fall ; are silent or reverberant — it is possible to gather the main

apocalyptical themes which have found bodies according to the Tradition. The annotators of John's text seem to treat it as if it were composed of almost anything other than of this resonant material. In the Greek text of chapter xviii in Nestlé, for instance, there are some one hundred and seventy-eight words in heavy type, or suggested quotations from the Old Testament, out of a chapter which is roughly six hundred words long — when all parts of speech are counted as one word. Subtract from the first total the words which have no significance, and it will be easily seen what a small number is left ; let us say about a hundred. Thus chapter xviii, from verses eleven to twenty-four, is cleared of heavy type ; except for one place where we read : “and they cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and mourning ”. That sentence describes such a common experience in Eastern life that the apocalyptist would almost have been witless had he not written it without the help of a source. What then of the words thus underlined in the first ten verses of the chapter ? There is not a phrase that is so distinctive as to designate itself Ezekiel, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. These writers and John approach one another in the apocalyptical themes they use. There can be no wonder that they also make some verbal approaches to one another. The craft and its Tradition of apocalyptic would cause the doing of both by them all. Their thematic agreements are of more consequence than their verbal ones. John had no need to read Ezekiel, for instance, to learn how to write Greek for ‘ persons of

men'; 'shipmaster'; 'made desolate'; 'stood' — and many other words of the same class. The themes where the apocalyptists severally agree are: Babylon is a name for any city under judgement; Harlot is the personal embodiment given to such a city; Phoenicia, for which Sidon or Tyre are representative cities, is a centre of cult and luxury upon which judgement falls. A fourth theme, which Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John have in common, is Jerusalem as a harlot-city. These four themes are traditional ones. They fit into one another. The transference of cosmic and cult ideas, through Phoenicia to Jerusalem, is the reason why they go together so neatly in the *Apocalypse*. When, then, John is writing of such a Jerusalem, the most natural literary thing he could do is to transfer as well to her the epical and apocalyptical description of Phoenicia's colour and riches and wantonness. The texture of a good part of chapter xviii is like Tyrian silk, or the inwreathing tones of the purple for which Phoenicia was famous. In the end John has not written a piece of literature but a glistening piece of apocalyptic. Tradition controlled his achievement. The *Lec-tionary of the Synagogue*, with its little apocalypses foreshadowing the remaking of Jerusalem, had dropped its seed into his mind and was the elementary inspiration of the structure of the *Apocalypse*. Tradition again had John in her powerful hands. He would not pull down the walls of Rome to build a 'new Jerusalem'. The festal idea was to renew Jerusalem. But John had not become an auto-

maton. We shall see that both plans and architectural triumph are evidences of original genius. He was to do what no other apocalypticist had done. Yet he is loyal to the most familiar emotions and thoughts of the Semitic mind.

The Woman in purple, then, is Jerusalem and not Rome. She could not be ancient Tyre any more than ancient Rome. The destruction of either would not prepare the way for a 'new Jerusalem'. The destruction of both could not fulfil the apocalypticism of the Festal Calendar for the Day of Tabernacles. It would have been a work of literary supererogation for John to have described the fall of Rome or any other city than that of Jerusalem. Both apocalyptically and structurally, from the standpoint of the Lectionary of the Synagogue and of the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, the fall of old Jerusalem must go before the rise of the 'new Jerusalem'. The Woman in purple is, therefore, not a brilliant piece of anti-Jewish tirade. Her overthrow, for John, is the downfall of apocalyptic.

There is a prominent feature in the description of the Woman in purple to which we have as yet paid no attention. "Upon her forehead a name written", says John. Since the time of Wettstein, it has been the custom to annotate this statement with tags from Juvenal<sup>1</sup> and Seneca.<sup>2</sup> They wrote of Roman women of light virtue wearing their names on frontal ornaments. Rome has gone from the chapter. There was no such custom among

<sup>1</sup> vi. 122 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Cont.* i. 2.



the Semites. Then another explanation is called for. The name is actually marked on the woman. My suggestion is that we have in her a literary approach to one of the principal conventions in Semitic magic. It is practised, for instance, down to our days by the Jews in Mosul.<sup>1</sup> When it is desired to slay a person a figure is made of him or her with the name inscribed upon it; then it is hurled into the element by which death is to come. In chapter xvii the figure is prepared and her name marked upon her; in chapter xviii the city is burned with apocalyptical fire.

There is no reason why the woman should be traced to an ancestor in one or more forms of the Semitic mother-goddess, because she is riding on an animal. She, in the language of apocalyptic, is a city. There is but a dim likeness in her picture with certain divine and semi-divine beings on Mesopotamian seals and stelae. That does not make her the descendant of any one of them. The animal she rides has his own apocalyptical individuality. His form is Subaraic. His ten horns are from the ancient plastic source. All of him comes from the Tradition. We must not turn the horns into kings of Jerusalem. The *Apocalypse* has suffered too much from being distorted into the foreign manners of Roman history that its apocalyptic should be tortured into late Hebrew history. For John, the beast has come up from the Abyss which, as we have seen has its entrance, according to cosmic

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (1906), 103 ff.

notions in cult and apocalyptic, in or near to Jerusalem. He is Death: the embodiment of the supremacy of the place of the dead over the Semitic mind. The Woman in purple, who is Jerusalem, rides Death.<sup>1</sup> She is one with Death in thought and fate. Therefore John will have to disenthroned this monster and the dread influences of his inescapable underworld if men and women are to find liberty. Only so can the empire of apocalyptic be brought low. That is the apocalypticist's next task, and ours is to study the manner of his triumph.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Touilleux, *L'Apocalypse et les cultes de Domitien et de Cybèle* (1935). New evidence and reasons for the exorcising of these two ghosts from the interpretation of the *Apocalypse* are set forth in my book.

## SECTION IV

THE THOUSAND YEARS, THE NEW  
CITY, AND NEW EARTH



## IV

### THE THOUSAND YEARS, THE NEW CITY, AND NEW EARTH

WITH the close of chapter xix the battle is done and Death is overcome. The War of the Ways has proved the triumph of the Way of Life over the Way of Death. That was its end: not the end of the world, but the ending of Death. The *Apocalypse*, then, is not an eschatological document but purely an apocalyptic one. Chapter xx upholds the former but, in the opinion of the commentators, rejects the latter most revolutionary conclusion. This commentatorial agreement, however, must be called into question. The commentators make John write, so to say, a dramatic pendant to the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Paul was thinking of resurrection at an age's or world's end, that is eschatology. John is thinking of resurrections before and at a day's end, which is apocalyptic. Was then Paul a Christian theologian and John an ordinary Semite with the power of the pen? My subject is not now the captivating one of tracing how much was human Semite and how much Christian thinker in Paul — that is one which still is left undone. It is the equally captivating one of demonstrating the remarkable qualities of John the thinker who, using the very idiom of the Semitic Folk-mind as it had never been

used before or since, subdued the springs of its thought to the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are not yet aware that this was what he did. Except these things are understood, the *Apocalypse* remains as a sealed book — a document out of which mystery and incomprehension may beget fresh futilities, in arithmetic and ethics, concerning the approach of God to men.

To summarise the views of the centuries upon chapter xx is not very difficult. Their main lines do not change. They are these: (1) The manifestation of the Millennial Kingdom at the imprisoning of Satan; (2) the simultaneous resurrection of martyrs, which is the first resurrection; (3) the loosing of Satan and the universal conflict; (4) the Last Judgement and the second resurrection; (5) the final overthrow of Satan and death for men. With these conclusions go two modern ones. The first is inspired by the study of the History of Religions. It strives to find ancient myth in chapter xx used as always, according to this view, in a manner that scarcely understands the material employed. The second is inspired by the new study of apocalypses. It tries to show how John is influenced by such writings as Fourth Ezra.

Those first five points have taken possession of the chapter, and for most students it seems impossible to read the words save in their terms. Commentators of today refuse to follow the method of Alexandria with chapter xx and put stark conclusions with symbolical mistiness. They tell us that the thousand years must be taken in literal style.

The short line of old commentators, from Tertullian to Victorinus, are backed against the Alexandrians. On that matter, indeed, this judgement has been laid down : " The earliest expounders are right, as they were in close touch with the apostolic time ".<sup>1</sup> Such a judgement certainly succeeds in inhibiting the minds of readers to looking at chapter xx in the way of the five points and in no other. It is surprising that no attempt at analysis is made of those " earliest expounders " that we might learn in how many ways their exposition was due to local and personal influences, and therefore very far from the modes and views of the apostolic time. Such a study would show that Africa is no surer ground than Alexandria upon which to rest so dogmatic a dictum. Instead of acquiescence in this opinion, we must follow the lead of the *Apocalypse* itself and ask : why is the material of chapter xx made with something which is most different from that of the rest of the book ? A question which presents its own inevitable successor : has this change in the material been brought about by any other than artificial and external means ?

These five points make the chapter akin with an abstract of juridical incident and statement. So far as the text of John's book is regarded, they cause an apocalypse to cease at xix. 21 and begin again at xxi. 1. The surge and verve of the book are suspended at the point where John is coming to his climax. We cannot help noticing as well that the apocalypticist took two notable chapters to deal

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Comm.* ii. 185.

with the Woman in purple. He takes four verses of dry *précis* to describe the White Throne and the Last Judgement, if what is said in the five points be true. Eschatology has not, as a rule, a drying effect on the imagination and on speech. The style and structure of the *Apocalypse* assert the view that if its author had been dealing with the Last Judgement and the end of the world, he would have done so with dignity and not in these clipped verses. The five points are condemned, first, by this authoritative though external criterion.

There are other reasons against them from internal points of view. Up to the beginning of chapter xx Death has been overcome as the menace of men which arises from the Abyss not far from Jerusalem. An indoctrinated chapter xx turns the cult figure of Death into an experience which befalls all men; and a factor of apocalyptic cosmology, the Abyss, into an adjunct of late doctrines of punishment and the Last Things. The apocalypticist is broken away from factors which are so intimate as to be inherent for the structure of his book. Again, Jerusalem with its primitive cosmic concomitants, the 'Centre' of the world as we have found, becomes subject to dogmatics and not to apocalyptic. She is conceived of as the seat of the Kingdom of Christ and "the centre of the evangelising efforts of the Church"<sup>1</sup> for a thousand years. When Gog and Magog and Satan are overcome, we are told that the Holy City which had come down from heaven (a first time) "is pre-

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Charles, *Comm.* ii. 190.



supposed to be withdrawn from the sphere of the former heaven and earth " and after being renewed, descends (a second time) to the new earth. Eschatology could countenance this excess of energy on the city's part, but the *Apocalypse* does not. Much may be considered dim in the book, but this one thing is very clear, that the city comes down once. Doctrine cuts her from anchorage in the apocalyptical cosmos ; apocalyptic must keep her there if structure and thought are of the consequence they appear to be to John. A third illustration of internal objection is in the use made of the thousand years. Is it because this is a big round figure that doctrine finds it useful ? Nothing substantial has been built on the shorter periods of time which have gone before. Some fantasies of a temporal and doctrinal kind, perhaps, but nothing more. As to the thousand years, we have made this a final figure for divine activities in the world, without even asking whether it had a source or how John had used both figures and source. It is no retort, that the figures can be fitted into Paul's ideas of the End of things between his two thens, " then they that are Christ's at his coming . . . (a thousand years) . . . then the end ". You may fit there many or few years, you will not illuminate Paul ; and if you apply both figures and Pauline saying to the *Apocalypse*, you will darken the mind of John. Paul has woven his argument : John has framed his *Apocalypse*. It matters not whether there are points of contact for the two. One man is arguing under the spell of an End : the other man

is building his sensitive structure under the reign of a Day. Somewhere their ideas are one: somewhere their design is the same.

Can this document be put back with naturalness into the texture of John's book? The answer to this question is a difficult one. For it will have to show the several parts of chapter xx as having those live ends of meaning which only an author could give them, and which also can compose a vital unity within itself and with the whole book. These things the text itself must attest. It will be remembered that the chapter tells, among other matters, of the doings of Gog and Magog. That was one of the illustrations of internal objection to the five points. Now some annotators put by the side of those verses the parallel Ezekiel xxxviii. 16. Some commentators say that Ezekiel was John's source. What no one has yet remarked is that Ezekiel xxxviii. 18 to xxxix. 16 was the appointed Lesson in the synagogal Lectionary for Tabernacles Sunday. Further, in verse nine of chapter xx we are told how these enemies "went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city". That is the misleading rendering of the Revised Version. The Authorised has this slight and ineffective difference, "they went up to the breadth of the earth". It is plain that even an ingenious mind could not get near to John's meaning with such helps. Wellhausen<sup>1</sup> published the awakening suggestion

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit., ad loc.* It is of small value to say, *e.g.*, that Ezekiel lies somewhere behind these closing chapters of the *Apocalypse* — *cf.* Car-

that the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς was identical with the phrase in Ezekiel xxxviii. 12, "the centre of the earth". Some commentators have contented themselves with repeating him as philologically suggestive, and there the matter has stopped. This parallel is just two verses before the beginning of the Lection for Tabernacles Sunday. John might have read back that short way in Ezekiel. A moment's reflection will prove that such a natural suggestion, as it seems to be, is not wanted. John was so aware of Jerusalem as the 'Centre' of the world that he made the fact one of the greater nuclei of his book's structure. The words he now uses make a tiny etching of the cupola or mount-like 'Centre', the alleged heart of the beloved city: "They went up upon the centre of the earth and circled (or wheeled) about the camp of the saints, the beloved city". Are there no other features in the little picture which can be brought out?

Its second verb ἐκύκλευσαν is an interesting one. It is commonly given a military meaning. But the word favours primarily the cosmic notions of the whole verse. We may remember that Cosmas Indicopleustes, in his *Christian Topography*,<sup>1</sup> tells of the heavenly bodies wheeling round the 'Centre' of the universe. They make their wheel-wise progress in the hands of angels. He uses a number of words just here which are 'wheel' words. The base

penter, *The Johannine Writings* (1927), 180 ff. What has to be determined is whether Ezekiel or any other Old Testament writer is used in the synagogal Lectionary.

<sup>1</sup> See especially Bk. ix. p. 287 ff. (ed. Winstedt, 1909).

for all this is of course the Greek noun *κύκλος*. Cosmas is repeating the ancient cosmic ideas of Palestine. Early Syrian art has passed to the copies of his manuscripts native pictures of those ideas. There is a very fine one in the Old Serbian translation<sup>1</sup> of the *Christian Topography* which illustrates admirably the interesting verse we are studying. About the 'Centre' — rising mount-like and seated upon the waters — angels wheel in ordered grades, as they bear in their hands the greater or lesser heavenly bodies. It would be in harmony with John's feeling for this cosmic source that he should perpetuate aright more than one of its features. And that in the fact of the good ministrants of the world's progress being displaced by the evil thralls of the dragon.

But, we may go on to ask, is not the word *παρεμβολή* rightly rendered 'camp'? And will not that one word be sufficient to maintain the military significance of the sentence? That most useful lexicographer Hesychius offers us two meanings which are not military. He says the word may also mean a throng or multitude of people; or, again, the massed dwellings of people. The second of these meanings will fit the allusion of the sentence to the 'Centre' of the world. We may render the whole thus: "They went up upon the centre of the earth and wheeled about the dwelling-places of the

<sup>1</sup> *Spomenik Srpske Kraljevske Akademije Beograd* (1922), xliv. Tab. xxiv. 46; cf. Tab. xi. 20, 21, with which cf. the photographs of the Ambrosian codex of Cosmas in Winstedt. I have much new evidence to illuminate the whole subject of the ideas of Cosmas, the cosmic designs in the codices of his book, and for the origins of *maḥḥae mundi*.

saints, the beloved city'. They would have to go up to it, for the Semitic view was that Jerusalem itself stood higher than any other place on earth and that the 'Centre', its Rock or sanctuary, rose higher than the city.<sup>1</sup> This Jerusalem was still on the earth. To the influence of the synagogal Lectionary in this chapter we add the presence of the cosmic factor which created the apocalypses that make its chief Lections. John's own live ends to the material of chapter xx are showing themselves.

There is a test we apply to certain transactions in which we humans engage, namely, that seeing is believing. It is good to use this criterion, when we can, for textual matters. A picture of the 'Centre' described in *Apocalypse* xx. 9 would help our Western senses to understand John and Semitic cosmology. The Smyrna codex of Cosmas Indicopleustes<sup>2</sup> has a series of illustrations with features unlike those of the other illustrated manuscripts of this valuable writer. It depicts in one of them what we have had to find by delicate anthropological and textual means. Four pillars support the vault of the sky. Just beneath it are the four Living Creatures. Below them rise the triple cosmic cupolas from the surface of the earth. We should note that the Syrian idea was three cupolas in place of the early Palestinian and Arabian single cupola :

<sup>1</sup> Wensinck, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Strzygowski, *Der Bilderkreis des Griechischen Physiologus* (1899), Taf. xxx. The Austrian archaeologist's description is not a helpful one. For the Serbian picture see *Spomenik*, Tab. x. 19 and p. 63. The Florentine picture can be seen, for example, in Winstedt, Pl. vi.

an interesting variant, if for no other reason than this, that it was known to S. Paul as 2 Corinthians xii. 2 informs us. In the valleys of the three mounts, which are set in a line, are gathered the dwellers on the 'Centre'. Arching over the whole is the upper vault of the sky, according to the Semitic view. Beneath it Jesus Christ the Pantokrator is represented. This picture was entitled 'The Kingdom of the Heavens'. The scribe of the manuscript did then what Charles and others have done later. What was mundane was made into that which was super-mundane.

This is proved by a comparison of the picture with others; for example, in the Belgrade and Florence codices of Cosmas. The Serbian manuscript has a drawing of the cosmos as a spectator would see the whole from the earth. The triple cupolas rise from a rectangular base. The water beneath and about them is naively marked in. Round the peaks of the cupolas the sun is disappearing, as he is round the pillars in the Smyrna picture. Over all this is the upper vault of the sky and in its centre the reigning Lord Jesus Christ. The Florence codex repeats this cosmical view, but with a single cupola set within a parallelopiped drawn in perspective. It has a vaulted roof, which is the sky; and under it a medallion in which again is the same conception of Jesus. There can be no doubt that the Smyrna picture shows the 'Centre' on the earth, and that it is peopled as John has said. The idea of the Lord in John's book and in the Cosmas picture is identical. Our apocalyptist is vindicated once

more by early Syrian art. And the conclusions we have made receive the support of evidence which the child in us all can grasp.

It may be objected that these conclusions leave a large portion of the chapter unaccounted for. Its motive is the dragon. What, too, of the 'thousand years'? What, again, of 'the great white throne'? Will not the presence of these items loosen the hold, on the chapter's composition, of the familiar structural things? These questions should be taken in turn. First, then, the dragon. It has to be recognised that what happens to this creature is the consequence of the War of the Ways: Chapter xx had to deal with the subject. But why in this manner, we may ask. And does not that manner wrench the whole subject clear of the empire of a Day? It is well to curb the dogmatic emotion, which 'the thousand years' sets up in us, that we may enquire how and when a Semite came to such ideas of the overthrow of Satan the dragon and Death.

In two ancient Hebrew writings, one a Talmudical lexicon<sup>1</sup> and the other the writer Abudarham,<sup>2</sup> a piece of the text of the Jerusalem *Talmud* has been preserved. It records how the first sound of the shofar makes Satan anxious. "He says, to himself, they are only doing what they have been commanded to do. But the second time he hears the sound, he knows that it is the shofar of the Messiah. As it is said, And it shall come to pass

<sup>1</sup> Finesinger, *H.U.C.A.* (1931-2), 220.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1566, 93b; also cited by Finesinger.

that on that day a sound shall be blown on a great shofar (Is. xxvii. 13). Then he is confused, for he can stay no longer in the world. As it is written, He (*i.e.* Jahweh) shall swallow up Death for ever (Is. xxv. 8)." The Talmudical lexicon adds that Satan realises that the time for swallowing him up has come. That of course only interprets the Isaian citation. Does this piece of the *Talmud* relate something which might happen anywhere during the Jewish year? Therefore it will have no festal significance. It has been demonstrated that this blowing of the shofar was on an ancient festival night which later became Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup> The prophet Zephaniah<sup>2</sup> called that time "the day of the shofar". John was not given the theme of the overthrowing of the dragon called Death by Isaiah xxv and xxvii. It is another heritage from the Tradition of apocalyptic. We should notice, too, that though this evidence from the *Talmud* concerns the figure of Death and his expulsion from this world; that from the *Apocalypse of Moses*, for instance, and its description of the seventh heaven, shows the presence of Death there. A circumstantial description is given of the figure seen by Moses: "ugly and his height of five hundred and forty years' journey, and he was girded forty times about his waist. From sole of foot to the head he was full of fiery eyes and whoever looked at him fell down in dread" (c. 22). John has given us no such details. The Tradition then supplied him with sanctions for the casting-out of

<sup>1</sup> Finesinger, 199, 202-23.

<sup>2</sup> i. 16.



the dreaded cult and apocalyptical figure from the cosmos, from the sky and the earth. And the Festal Calendar, as everywhere in his book, imposed upon him the rule of the Day of Tabernacles.

Second, the 'thousand years'. Eschatology, at the cross-roads of the world, brings our findings to a standstill with the ponderous claim, 'four times over the document says, a thousand years'. In this quandary, the apocalyptist comes to our aid. For him, as for others in simpler days than our own, Psalm xc was a piece of the saga of Moses, a great *Son of the Man*. A traditional title preserves that fact. More than this, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as the passing of yesterday, and a watch in the night", says the Psalm. It will be recalled that another great figure in the Folk-saga of *the Man* flashes into the text of one of John's chapters by means of a temporal phrase from his story. There is then precedent for John's taking another like phrase from the saga of him who has made vital contribution to the design and text of the *Apocalypse*.

We will suppose that the millennial dogmatism of the commentators grants that what has been said here and elsewhere about the thousand years can at least be described as one of John's live ends. It will proceed to argue that whatever of these may be found in the first ten verses of chapter xx, none can be discovered in the incident of "the great white throne".

It has been said already that this throne is set up in a corner four verses large. It is not big

enough for a throne of judgement raised on the last day of any world. An apocalyptical throne might fit there, but not an eschatological one. Did John put there such an apocalyptical throne? Could it vitally unite itself with the live ends of the first ten verses of chapter xx? It must do that or the suspicion is valid that the throne of the closing verses can be claimed by Eschatology.

There are two verses in the incident which demand closer study than the others. Verse eleven, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the sky fade away"; and verse thirteen, "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them". These verses lend the incident distinction. They also can lead us to what John had in mind when writing it. Let us remind ourselves that in the eleventh month of the Jewish year, Tishri, which too is the month of the Feast of Tabernacles, two judgements of men and the world occur. The first is on New Year's Day, and the second on the Day of Atonement. As to the first the Mishnah<sup>1</sup> informs us that on New Year's Day all who come into the world pass before Jahweh like sheep. That is to say it is a judgement of alive men and women. This is unlike John's idea, as even an idle glance will show. We move on to the Day of Atonement, the great fast that precedes Tabernacles. Turning to the Lectionary, we find that its oldest prophetic Lection for the Day of Atonement is the prayer of

<sup>1</sup> *Rosh Hashanah*, i. 2.

Jonah.<sup>1</sup> Everyone remembers that he prays from "the belly of Hades"; "and the flood was round about me, all thy waves and thy billows passed over me"; or again, "I went down to the roots of the mountains, the earth with her bars closed about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from the place of the dead, O Lord my God". It is not always remembered that Jahweh's judgement on the Day of Atonement penetrated to the dead imprisoned in Hades and Death and the sea. John understood that. He also knew that a more solemn purple stained Palestinian vines than that of the grapes when the joys of the vintage festival, Tabernacles, had come. For example, Psalm xlii is one of the proper psalms for the Day of Tabernacles. It actually cites the prayer of Jonah, "all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me".<sup>2</sup> The two poems touch again and again in other verses. Thus the master-thought of the Day of Atonement floods into the Day of Tabernacles. John has his inspiration for his judgement of the dead, in the sea and Death and Hades, from the memory of what was done on the fast which went before Tabernacles. A captious critic may suggest that the live end which is appearing will want more life than the Day of Tabernacles affords, if it is to find true vital attachments with the whole chapter. John is able to answer him. The eleventh verse of chapter xx is composed simply of the bare lines of the architecture of Psalm cxiv. Some annotators

<sup>1</sup> Büchler, *The Triennial Reading of the Law and Prophets* (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1894), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Jonah, ii. 3.

have placed that psalm in the margins of the text of chapter xx. What they have not noticed is that it is the first song in the Hallel.<sup>1</sup> Nor have they gone on to consider how great a feature of Tabernacles was that coronet of song. The whole creation flees before the face of Jahweh; that is its burden and in turn the festal judgement motive used in the *Apocalypse*. The live ends of the incident of the white throne fit organically with those of each member of chapter xx. The incident also fits apocalyptically and temporally with the scheme of John's book. There is therefore united support from the whole chapter for the sovereignty of the Day of Tabernacles over the whole of the *Apocalypse*.

The repetition of the 'thousand years' is a heightening of the effect of time-rhythms. As in a historical saga we come upon lines which are put to a metre with movement as of a sea of sound, so in apocalyptical saga there are situations where the time-rhythms deepen and greaten as of the beating of the very heart of Time. The Semitic Folk-mind is therein enthralled by the most awesome and majestic prerogatives of Jahweh. The apocalyptist catches that throbbing to and fro of its heart in his four-fold repetition of the temporal phrase. We have reduced this splendour of emotion to calendrical inanity. No man can calculate the wrong this has wrought in Christian thought. It has certainly misconstrued the *Apocalypse* so that neither as apocalyptist nor as Christian thinker has

<sup>1</sup> Cohen, *Jewish Ency.* vi. 176 f.

John been understood. Both sides of his work can be put into their true place and values by the help of verse fourteen, "And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire". The beast called Death and the personalised place of the dead are hurled into the Abyss of fire; which Folk-cosmology<sup>1</sup> said was not far from Jerusalem. The menaces unto death in apocalyptic are made to perish in apocalyptic fire. They are found to destroy one another. Before the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* such things must pass away. We may appreciate at last why John has no need to use the term 'parousia' in his book; though its only true alternative title is *The Parousia of Jesus Christ*, as will be shown. At the moment we may notice that this second title could not be an equivalent of the Hadrianic inscription from Tegea which reads, "in the year 69 of the first parousia of the god Hadrian".<sup>2</sup> John's 'parousia' is the actual 'presence' of the Revealer and revelation; and not the first or second 'coming' — that is 'visit' — of a divinised emperor. The Way of Life and the Life Himself are actually overcoming the Way of Death in all his book. John wrote the book that Jesus' *Apocalypse* might conquer apocalyptic. Millennial Eschatology is occupied with doctrines and schemes of ideas which are as foreign to John as to the Folk-mind of the Semites. Both in design and material chapter xx is apocalyptically most loyal to Folk-material, and particularly as it was

<sup>1</sup> *E.g. Enoch*, xviii. 11, xxvii. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (1910), 377.

present to the Semitic mind on the Day of Tabernacles. Its burden of dream was the coming of a Jerusalem perfect in ritual service. John also will go on to build his holy city and world.

The simple opening of chapter xxi brings serenity to the mind even of a Westerner. It must have lapped a Semite deep in delightful peace. We are, however, supposed to be quieted by the vision of a new world, shorn of one of its elements, away in the third dimension. It is forgotten that an eschatologist of the first century could not trifle with that illusory area of the universe. The apocalypse of a Day would have to take even a more real view of things. Thus the difference between the servants of the End and of the Day can be best brought out by comparing 2 *Peter* iii. and *Apocalypse* xxi. Whoever was the author of the Epistle he had a flair for turning the raw material of apocalyptic into urgent Christian eschatology. He puts so little veneer on what he takes as almost to record nakedly his apocalyptic spoil. Even when he is ethical the same condition can be noted. For example, the long catalogue which begins "adding on your part" this or that virtue. It used to be said that this was Stoic material touched by something else.<sup>1</sup> A reference to *Hebrew Enoch*<sup>2</sup> will prove that it was more homely material than that. There Jahweh 'added to', such is the verb used, one virtue after another by admitting him successively through the gates of the heavenly treasures wherein each was

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Bigg, *Epistles of S. Peter and S. Jude* (1901), 257.

<sup>2</sup> viii.

stored. A glance over the manuscript variants of the list of these virtues will lead to close enough analogy between apocalypse and Epistle. The author of 2 *Peter* handles the crude stuff of apocalyptic with haste rather than delicacy. A second instance is in his third chapter. He begins with 'an inference',<sup>1</sup> so it is said, from Psalm xc. 4. Neither the Feast of Tabernacles nor the saga of Moses is weaving patterns in his mind. He cites the psalm and its 'thousand years' to emphasise his own notion of the swift coming of the End. His "thief in the night" comes with such sudden tumult that Paul's in 1 Thessalonians v. has footfalls of gossamer on a night of enshrouding velvet. Out of this overwhelming fire are to come "new heavens and a new earth"; he is doubtless thinking of a cosmos with seven heavens. This writer makes more eschatological noise than the apocalyptic alarm of Joel. He crudely transfers to the vicinity of Christian ideas the apocalyptic scheme of Jahvistic judgments on Nature. It is unnecessary to compare further our apocalypticist with him. In every way the End and the Day mould their respective writers differently.

The writer of the *Apocalypse* makes use of Folk-material with such dainty sympathy that it can bring anodyne to the Semite. "I saw a new sky and a new earth: for the first sky and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more." How silently that surrogate of Death, Leviathan, has been swept from the Folk-mind! "The sea is no more."

<sup>1</sup> Bigg, 295.

That was his habitat. The writer is not thinking of "the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea". A number of expositors have troubled themselves to say that it was this sea, and that the Jews who were not seafaring people would welcome the excision of that element. The most gentle thing to be said about the two judgements is that neither is based on understanding. In the *Assumption of Moses* (x. 6) we read "and the sea will pass into the Abyss" — which is Folk-cosmology causing this sea to vanish not far from Jerusalem. That was exactly what and how the Jews would think of the apocalyptic sea. John too knew that the sea in which Leviathan dwelt was that which encircled the 'Centre' of the universe. The mosaics of the synagogue in Hamman-Lif, for instance, pictured that; and in so doing they made pictorial just what the ordinary Semite believed. Leviathan was drowned by John in his own cosmical and apocalyptic element, as Death and Hades were in theirs. The Folk-mind could grasp that the dread waters which surged through the hours of Yom Kippur, and on into the joys of the gathering of grapes, were the waves of Leviathan's sea. They have vanished with the third embodiment of Death. That is the secret of peace in the opening of chapter xxi. Again we are aware of John's apocalyptic oneness with and portrayal of the Semitic mind. He still keeps closer than side by side with the Tradition of apocalyptic. This he does throughout his superb closing chapters. There is much to examine in the commentators, concerning the text of these chapters,



before we can follow the traces of those creative simplicities.

It was once the habit to break up chapters xxi and xxii into a number of sources. Bousset put an end to that vice. He found that the two chapters were John's, but the description of the city was based on a source different from the rest of the text. There, on the whole, the critical view rested until Charles. With Johnsonian weight, though lacking the English Doctor's dexterity and Doric salt, he vanquished Bousset. "A deeper study of the materials", he writes, "would have precluded his assuming the existence of xxi. 9-xxii. 5 as an independent source, seeing that it is internally self-contradictory and that yet linguistically it is from the hand of our author." An outer unity of language thus covers an inner complexity of problems in ideas and order of text. The language is John's, it is claimed; but the text of the chapter is "a chaos of conflicting conceptions".

It is illuminating to come upon what sets the motion of a critic's mind — to find the beginnings of those views which propel him with their own gathering momentum. As for much else of his work, their first appearance is in Charles' edition of the *Books of Enoch*. There he places an impassable gulf between xxi. 1 and 2 which tells of a new city and earth, and xxii. 15 where all sorts of sinners are said to be outside the gates of the city. He remarks, "but if there were a new earth this would be impossible".<sup>1</sup> It is that alleged dilemma which in the

<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1893, 45.

end completely disrupts the text of chapters xxi and xxii. It will be valuable to show their upbreak in detail. To analyse Charles' work is to analyse the commentaries of his own generation.

First, a linguistic unity is claimed for the *Apocalypse* from chapter i to chapter xx. 4.<sup>1</sup> A general sort of unity in ideas lies behind that external claim. After that there is no progress at all in ideas or sequence of sentences. In chapter xx. 11 and the following verses "the final consummation and destruction of all evil and of death itself" are said to be accomplished. In xxi. 1-4 occurs "the closing scenes of a great world-struggle between good and evil". No place can be found for pain or tears or death "in the universe of God", which is the description of the new heaven and the new earth. These conclusions are looked upon as the only and indisputable ones to be made from the text.

Second, the study of xxi. 5 to the end of the book soon confronts such conclusions with what is described as — "a greater contradiction in thought and statement is hardly conceivable". For after the coming of the new Jerusalem, with a new heaven and a new earth, the text informs us that "outside the gates of the Holy City, which has come down from God to the new earth, there are dogs and sorcerers and murderers", the representatives of evil and death. Further, it is complained "how is it that in xxii. 2 the leaves of the tree of life are said

<sup>1</sup> See also Charles, *An attempt to recover the original order of the text of Revelation, xx. 4-xxii.* (*Proceedings of British Academy*, 1915-1916), 37 ff.

to be for the healing of the nations ? This statement can have no meaning unless it applies to the period of the Millennial Kingdom." It is then argued that no healing would be necessary if the world had been made new. In the light of these claimed contradictions Charles concludes that xxi. 24-27 — in which the nations will walk in the illumination of the city whose gates are never closed — the Millennial Kingdom must be still in existence. The second position, therefore, is in flagrant contradiction with the first position.

Third, two solutions alone can meet the dilemma. Either a considerable portion of chapters xx to xxii was not written by John, or if the whole was written by him another hand has brought chaos to his work. This alternative condition could issue from the presence of some Johannine material and a patchwork of sources. Of the latter there have been conjectured by Spitta, four sources ; Weiss, three ; Erbes, two ; Bousset, one : these are set aside by the demonstration of linguistic unity. The conclusion stands that the text of chapters xx to xxii is disarranged " in an astonishing degree ". It is later described as " the intolerable confusion of the text in xx to xxii ". These impressions are so vivid, as well they might be when couched in such language, that the opinion is hazarded that John died when his book had reached the third verse of chapter xx. After him came " a faithful but unintelligent disciple " who disastrously pieced together the rest of the book from " a series of independent documents ", which had been written by John as notes for his

concluding chapters. According to this view, he was not as fortunate as the Venerable Bede.

Fourth, the demonstrative proofs of these drastic conclusions are to be found in the primary and secondary confusions of ideas in the closing chapters. What is the primary confusion? "There is in reality", we are told, "two descriptions of the Holy City, and not one as has hitherto been universally assumed." There are two visions and not one: two cities and not one. The first "presupposes the existence of the present earth". Its document is represented by xxi. 9 to xxii. 2, with verses 14, 15, and 17 of the latter chapter. That is from the invitation to see the Bride of the Lamb to the description of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the city's street. To that strip of text is tagged the beatitude for those who can enter the city's gates and the list of those who are without the city, together with the antiphon of the Spirit and the Bride welcoming men to the water of life. Because of the phenomena in this tagged portion, it is concluded that "the first heaven and the first earth are still in being". The second city is more fragmentarily portrayed in these chapters. Its partial description is found in xxi. 1-4c, xxii. 3-5. That is from the declaration, "I saw a new sky and a new earth" to its fellow "the first things are passed away". Whilst the piece from chapter xxii covers the passing of the curse to the nightless city whose light is God. This city is said to be distinguished from the other by its title, 'new'. Sin no longer exists on the earth. The first city is said to be "supermundane,

as befitting Christ and the glorified saints, and yet is accessible to the actual dwellers on the earth". The second city is purely "supermundane". The first is conceived of as a centre for the evangelisation of the world during the Millennial period. The second is a whiter Rose of the ages than Dante had ever dreamed about. For the present we may remark on these claims that if John's disciple had thus bungled the supposed notes of his master concerning two cities, he richly merits the judgement which runs: "We naturally conclude that this editor was a man of mean intelligence".

Fifth, there are certain secondary confusions, so it is said, which must be taken into account. For example, the present text of chapters xxi and xxii prevent the fulfilment of what are described as "prophecies of the evangelisation of the nations of the world". According to that text "the nations are simply annihilated before the advent of the Heavenly City". xv. 4 is said to be such a prophecy. This is the last verse of what the apocalypticist has called "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb", and a stanza in it says: "for all the nations shall come and worship before thee". The song thus becomes prophecy and its fulfilment is more sure, we are told, when the description of the first city is "restored immediately after xx. 3". Once more, there is contradiction and worse between xi. 15 and what is found in the last three chapters of the *Apocalypse*. Chapter xi is treated as xv. It becomes prophetic when the "great voices" are

heard saying : " the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ ". Now chapter xx precedes what is called " the first judgement " with a destruction of the nations by means of fire out of heaven. Further, xxi and xxii portray the nations as finding health in the Tree of Life and entering the city. Such textual incongruities can only be put right by placing a description of the city of the Millennial Kingdom before the narrative of the " great white throne ". Other illustrations of claimed confusions could be given. They serve to demonstrate that this critical view places all the weight of its conclusions upon the supposed presence of two cities in chapters xxi and xxii, the eschatological character of those chapters and the incompetence of the first-century editor both as student of texts and of religious thought.

It will be manifest to the most incurious among us that these five points cover a very serious indictment of the closing portion of the *Apocalypse*. They have been widely accepted. That fact constitutes their chief claim on attention. Therefore it is proposed to ask of them whether they understand John and his city. The two questions merge into one another. The book and the city are inseparable. Its structure and progress of ideas have promised from the opening verses their glory of bloom, the city. Where the earlier Semitic inspirations of apocalyptic had to issue, there their Christian transformation would be bound to end. The *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, realised on a Day

of Tabernacles, could have had but thwarted intention if the Bride of the Lamb had not come in beauty and peace upon the earth. Therefore, we have still to apply ourselves to radical problems, how John as an apocalyptist was at work and how he meant to crown his book.

As soon as we take up again the creative factors of the author's mind and book we find those five points under criticism. The first claim of those factors is that the points commit OPTICAL ERROR. They look at the universe in a modern astronomical way: John looked at it in the old Semitic way. They see earth and sky and sea as approved by Greenwich in the twentieth century, or in some dateless century of the End. John saw them as they were familiarly known in Jerusalem of the first century. Such views belonged to the Ghetto of that day. Consequently an apocalyptical sea ought not to lave the shores of a modern non-apocalyptical universe. Nature forbids. What is even more noteworthy, apocalyptic forbids. The sea which was the element of the surrogate of Death is no more. It has left behind a sky and an earth with which conceptually it had companioned. How would John understand them? And how could he account them to be made new? We must view them from the 'Centre' of the earth, that is, Jerusalem. The striking statement in chapter xx. 9, of the multitudes climbing upon and wheeling about the 'Centre', anticipates that he will so view them. From that vantage, the earth is a cupola or a raised rectangle in shape; and the sky droops

over it in similar form. The designations of these vary : upper and lower sanctuary or house or tent. In each instance the shape of the two is the same. They could consort with that vanished sea. And they are at home in an apocalypse. It is from this universe of the 'Centre' that Death has been banished, and then made new. Not from a universe according to hypotheses as they are today or will be in some distant age, but from a universe of things as they were almost two thousand years ago. This view has novelty. It has also ample evidence for its support.

The second claim made by those factors against the five points is of FESTAL ERROR. After this new world, a voice is heard : " Lo, the σκηνή (tent) of God is with men and he shall tabernacle (or tent) among them ". The consolations follow the presence of God ; there is no more death nor tears nor pain — " the first things are passed away ". The voice is answered by him who sits on the throne, " Lo, I make all things new ". The five points say that such events must come after the time of the city of the Millennial Kingdom. Also they try to equate σκηνή and Shekinah,<sup>1</sup> on the authority of *Talmud* and Targum. But the *Apocalypse* speaks of more than a spiritual presence of the divine, which is all and more than the proposed equation sets forth. What has come down is the tent or tabernacle of God. It is not good to spirit away features which, for an apocalypticist, have their own

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., Taylor, *Pirke Aboth*, 44 ; Charles, *Comm.*, *ad. loc.* xxi. 3 and 5.



substantiality. The tent or tabernacle of Jahweh is the most sought feature of the Feast of Tabernacles. Again the synagogal Lectionary is of help. The proper psalms for the Day sing of Jahweh's *Sukkah*. In Psalm xlii. 4 the pilgrim himself gives voice to the fact of his passing along to the "wonderful tabernacle", and in Psalm lxxvi. 2 it is called "His tabernacle" which is in the midst of the worshippers of Jahweh at the festival. A midrash on this latter psalm says this tent or tabernacle was there "in the beginning of the creation of the world".<sup>1</sup> This ancient comment can only refer to the 'Centre' as its site.

Turning again to the text of these psalms, we find the singer in xlii. 3 saying, "My tears have been meat to me night and day", and a few stanzas later he is telling of the place of the dead inhabited by Leviathan. Psalm xliii. 3, which also is a song for this festival, asks the question, "Why go I mourning?" The same consciousness of the deep shadow on the Semitic mind, Death and the wonder if the tent would be there, is present as in the companion song. John does what no Jewish Festival of Tabernacles had done: he actually brings the *Sukkah* of God among His people; and tears and Death and mourning, which could not be kept from the vineyards of Palestine, have passed away. The Semite is following his sources: the Christian is transmuting them into the finest gold of help for the human spirit. On both counts the five points

<sup>1</sup> See Thackeray, 69, 73; also Ps. xxvii. 5, which he connects with the festival.

are at fault. They attempt to treat chapter xxi as if neither of these conditions existed. Once more the apocalypticist himself offers clear attestation for both facts and deductions from them. "He said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give unto him that is athirst freely of the fountain of the water of life" (xxi. 5-6). Jesus Himself is speaking. In the *Apocalypse* He transmutes the material of Tabernacles; just as He did during His Jerusalem ministry, for so the Gospel of John records.<sup>1</sup> These first two criticisms of the five points come together when we remember that the Lesson for the Day of Tabernacles, Zechariah xiv. 8, celebrates Jerusalem as the 'Centre' of the earth.<sup>2</sup> From her "flowing waters go out". John moves on to the position of Jesus Christ. The waters stored beneath the 'Centre' become "the fountain of living waters" in and through Him. In the ancient festival the earth was to be fertilised: in the new usage of Tabernacles the spirit of man is to be made alive.

The third criticism of the five points arises from the combination of the two foregoing ones. It is that they make APOCALYPTICAL ERROR. The five points combine to assert a city which is an eschatological city, a foundation for a thousand years with its varied evangelical impacts on mankind; and a very different city from that which is to come. But

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Burch, *The Structure and Message of St. John's Gospel* (1928), 80 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Thackeray, 67. See also *Targum* (Jerus.), Ex. xxviii. 30.

the city which John sees is a Jerusalem of the Day of Tabernacles. The Zechariah apocalypse dreamt of the city whose meanest earthen vessel should be doing ritual service. John sees his city coming down to earth, and its architect is the Alpha and the Omega. This is the final reason for extruding the indoctrination of John's closing chapters. His text cannot even be read with that staining every syllable. Every phase of his work as an apocalypticist demands that extrusion. The same demand also insists that the Architect of the city must receive recognition. The pronouncement "I will make all things new" and the city go together. A swarm of alleged parallels are gathered round the Architect's declaration — from *Enoch*<sup>1</sup> and 2 *Baruch*<sup>2</sup> and 4 *Ezra*.<sup>3</sup> Their presence is to prove that "in current apocalypses the idea was a familiar one". They becloud and do not illumine the text of the *Apocalypse*. For they represent ordinary Jewish Messianism. They will cancel into Millennial Eschatology, but have no part with the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*. The Christian in him is leading the Semite in him to aid the triumph of the revelation of his Lord. That is his principal concern.

Moreover, the claim of the five points concerning a first city, and that its description ought to be placed after xxi. 2, represents another apocalyptic fault. xxi. 1 to 8 is a prelude to xxi. 9 and following verses. This literal order accompanies the visual order in apocalyptic. There is the prelude phase

<sup>1</sup> 32. 6; 44. 2; 45. 4; 72. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 57. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 7. 75.

of sight as there is the decisive phase. Both are treated by an apocalyptist with immediacy of speech. Not as if a dim condition of sight was giving place to a clear condition. But as experiences which, though succeeding one another, are so seen as to be expressed only in the same direct manner of narrative. It is not that a prophetic prelude is wanted in apocalyptic; but that its almost dreamlike material makes use of dreamlike anticipatory statement before one of the greater phases of an apocalypse is disclosed. What premonitory passages are to historical saga, that anticipatory glimpses are to apocalyptical saga. Then both, this city of the Day of Tabernacles in itself and the placing of its prelusive narrative, are in keeping with John's plans and also with the Tradition of apocalyptic.

Before we pass on, one other feature of this city of a so-called millennium calls for notice. It is said that it was meant to be "a world-metropolis" apocalyptically manifested to take the place of ancient Rome. There is only the logic of Millennial theory — or ought we to say Millennial economics — to be found as evidence for this conception. It has no more place in fact than the statement of a fragment of a Jeremiah apocryphon, quoted by the Syrian theologian Bar Ṣalibi,<sup>1</sup> which declares the old prophet foretold that "a better house" would replace ruined Jerusalem and that its name was Constantinople. Byzantium has done for Jeremiah

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise against the Melchites*, vi. (ed. Mingana, *Bulletin Rylands Library* (1927), 148).

what Millennialism has done for John. That great prophet and our remarkable apocalyptist would naturally be innocent of such political and archaeological dogmatism. Time also prevents the first; and Art, which also is Tradition, precludes the second. John did and could not emulate Constantine the Great. The 'new Jerusalem' is not another 'New Rome'.

The fourth claim against the five points, from these same factors, is of COSMICAL ERROR. John is taken "in the Spirit to a mountain great and high" and is shown the city "coming down out of the sky". This mountain is the 'Centre' itself, the 'Rock', which is the heart of Jerusalem. He was not taken to the mount of Olives, for that was a cloven height for every Semite on a Day of Tabernacles<sup>1</sup> who knew the festal apocalypse. That 'Centre' was considered many miles high — so high, indeed, that its gleaming summit was said to be visible in northern Syria by Semitic Folk-opinion. In other words John is in the same position in xxi. 10 as he was in xxi. 2. The anticipatory has passed into the substantive vision. The same city is seen but now it descends. The discovery of its nature, which has eluded the commentators so long, excludes the possibility that it could be a second city. It also demonstrates the truth of this fourth claim that cosmical error has been done with the text of the *Apocalypse*.

The fifth and last criticism of the five points is

<sup>1</sup> Zech. xiv. 4. On the subject of the cleaving of the mount of Olives, see Morgenstern, *H. U. C. A.* (1937-8), 14 ff.

that they commit ARCHITECTURAL ERROR. They misconceive totally the city, its genius and construction. For that reason we must have their detailed plan before us. It is assumed, first of all, that there was an exemplary sketch of the plan of a holy city. It is designated the city of the gods. A city compounded of sky and moon and sun. Planned and peopled by the twelve signs of the Zodiac,<sup>1</sup> it had twelve gates through which those stars could pass and repass. Its glittering street was the Milky Way. That is a sketch of an olympian city, it is suggested, which might have had its place in the back of John's mind. A Mesopotamian might have seen such a city as the swift close of day passed into a wonderful night of stars, and as he remembered Babylon. John was not of that country, and had neither Babylonian memories nor predisposition for the use of Babylonian material. In these latter points he was one with the Tradition of apocalyptic. There are other later designs which draftsmen have put on paper. The plans of Ezekiel for the rebuilding of Jerusalem form an interesting example. Certain argue that John had been a keen student of them, but they did not influence him. We must pencil in their salient lines that the reasons for this opinion might appear. Ezekiel puts twelve gates to his city, and names them after the tribes of Israel. "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that, there grew many trees for food, whose leaf will not wither and whose fruit shall not fail." These trees bear their first-fruits every

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Books of Enoch*, 72. 2 ff.

month, because they are watered from beneath the sanctuary. Other than these features, the city is an annex to the vast temple, with numerous out-buildings for its ministrants. There are some glimpses in this plan which look like John's. Charles and those who follow him declare against Ezekelian influence. What Ezekiel xl to xlviii did not is said to have been accomplished by Exodus xxviii. A description of the stones in the high-priest's breastplate is put together with Ezekiel xxviii, which tells of the regalia of a king of Tyre — the Hebrew text giving the names of nine stones and the Greek of twelve stones. These commentators find the architectural individuality of the Johannine city in the peculiar uses which it is supposed he made of these precious stones.

There are two variant types of architecture favoured by this school of thought. They may be distinguished as German and Irish Romanesque, the broad origins of which are known, but each style is deeply marked by its adaptor. Bousset represents German Romanesque. This style derives solely from Exodus xxviii: "a row of ruby, topaz and emerald shall be the first row; carbuncle, sapphire and sardonyx the second row; jacinth, agate and amethyst the third row; chalcedony, beryl and jasper the fourth row". But, argues Bousset, John did not read the stones in the pentateuchal order. He began at the second row, not in the first; then afterwards went to the fourth, and ended in the third row. Still not content with this originality of grade; John followed also originality of order. He read

the first and the second rows from right to left, and the third and fourth rows from left to right. For the present an impressionistic criticism only may be offered on this architectural style and its ascription to John. The city of chapter xxi seems too simple and direct in its lines for John to have evolved it in such a labyrinthine manner.

Charles represents Irish Romanesque. This style, too, has its involutions. It runs, as is known, to luxury of ornament. An authority on this matter characterises it in general as "complicated knotted and spiral patterns". He is not aware, however, that the new Jerusalem had been built in the style. First, then, the angel who measured the city is said to have perambulated it in strange manner. He went, so xxi. 13 is read, first to the East and on to the North wall; from the North to the South, then from the South to the West wall. In xxi. 19-20 is the description of the twelve foundations. It is proposed "to discover the possible order" in which they were laid by bringing the two mentioned passages together. At this point Irish retorts to German Romanesque that the order of the stones in the city's foundations "has nothing to do with that in Exodus xxviii, nor is it to be explained from any accidental inversion or misreading of the twelve stones arranged in four lines". What, then, gave rise to the difference in order between the *Apocalypse* and Exodus? The Exodus account was not influenced by the recorded fact that when Israel went into camp the twelve tribes were tented in rectangular formation — three tribes to each point of the compass (Num-



bers ii).<sup>1</sup> The simple reason for that being, Exodus was describing the high-priest's breastplate. John, however, knew of the fashion of Israel's camp. If now Exodus xxviii, Numbers ii, and *Apocalypse* xxi are joined together, their composition will yield the stones, in the order of the angel's measuring of the rectangular city. Charles thinks further that chapters vii. 5 to 8 (where the sealed of the twelve tribes are mentioned), xxi. 13, 19, and 20 were meant by John to be parts of a "coherent conception" — that means the conception which has just been summarised. The uniting of camp formation and the rows of jewels involved John in another intricate piece of workmanship. He had to contrive the writing of his book in three different places and the moulding of its structure so as to meet its demands. This will mean that the crowning portion of the book does not issue from its main source but from a subsidiary source — a view which appears to bring artificiality into work which hitherto has shown complete and simple unity with its main source. Charles' claim, with a challenge against its rejection, is followed by a sentence which has no glimpse of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Asatir*, x. 21 ff., where is another geographical setting of the tribes. The version in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, liii. 9 ff. (ed. Gaster (1899), xciv. f., 152 ff.), is even more remarkable. Analysis can show that the astrological explanation of camp and stones is the latest layer of tradition. The most remarkable pictorial representation of this camp is in the Old Serbian version of Cosmas Indicopleustes (*Spomenik*, cit. *supra*), Tab. xvii. 34. It represents the tribes drawn up about the central square in an order of its own: North — Judah; Issachar; Zabulun. South — Ephraim; Manasseh; Benjamin. West — Dan; Asher; Naphtali. East — Reuben; Simeon; Gad. Each version has its own order. The Cosmas version has one ancient feature: there is no astrological reference in it.

Irish humour in it : “ if it is rejected, some other explanation must be discovered, else the direction pursued by the angel in measuring the walls — E.N.S.W. — is highly capricious.”

These gems, rectangular plan, and tribes have to be carried on to another stage of architectural involution. On the authority of Kircher<sup>1</sup> each of the stones is connected with a sign of the Zodiac. Philo<sup>2</sup> and Josephus,<sup>3</sup> it is urged, thus equated the stones of the breastplate with astrological signs. That John also did this is categorically declared in the phrase, “ cannot be questioned ”. Why? The gems with zodiacal values are arranged in threes to the sides of the rectangular camp. It is concluded then that these zodiacal stones occupy an order which exactly reverses the astral path of the sun through them. The knots and spirals have come to an end. The city is built according to Irish Romanesque. Three chief conclusions are drawn from its maze-like style, which reminds one of the writhing ornamentation of the most complicated page of the *Book of Kells*: (1) John regards his city “ as having nothing to do with the ethnic speculations of his own or past ages regarding the city of the gods ”; (2) John deliberately dissociates his city from the astrological one by naming its gates after the twelve tribes, and by making each

<sup>1</sup> *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1653), i. 11, ii. 177 ff. This equating of camp and gems and signs of the Zodiac was done in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, liii. 9. The Hebrew writer arranged the tribes on the sides of the square in an order differing from Num. ii. and from Charles. Both writers achieve an arbitrary and whimsical result.

<sup>2</sup> *De Monarchia*, ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ant.* iii. 7. 7.

gate of a single pearl ; (3) John puts greater distance between his city and that one by using the stones "in an ornamental sense" and by naming them after the twelve Apostles. Once more the meek beauty of the city in the *Apocalypse* seems not to be the creation of any such antiquarian ingenuities. It is not an irreverent comment on all this nor any attempt at light paradox which says that the commentators appear to have been so occupied with surpassing one another's subtleties that they have almost ignored the text of the *Apocalypse*.

There are four questions which actually arise from the text of chapter xxi concerning the city's architecture : (1) What is the city's *φωστήρ* — its 'light' or 'luminary' according to the accepted renderings ? (2) Why is the city rectangular in shape ? (3) Why has it twelve gates of one pearl ? (4) Why has it twelve foundations of precious stones ? These questions must be followed by certain others about the external features of the city. Then in proper order will come those which concern its spiritual qualities.

An *impasse* has been set up in our understanding of the spiritual genius of the new Jerusalem by our negligence of the problems of its architectural genius. All students of the *Apocalypse* should be predisposed to the view that these two ought to be mutually explanatory because of John's workmanship. Instead of which we have tried to subject both to certain storied religious prejudices. The city has been given the allure of amazing jewel-work, lying in the light of the sunset on the outer-

most rim of Time. It has not yet become for the succeeding centuries what it was for John — the immortal city in this world lit by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Somehow the Semite and Christian in him so co-operated as to create that loveliest thing. We must try to rediscover how it was done. To do this will answer as well those opinions which talk of the confusion of two cities in chapters xxi and xxii and of a disciple's lack of knowledge and skill.

(1) *The City's φωστήρ*.—Commentaries and translations have not yet found out that this was an architectural feature of John's city. It has seemed queer to both that the city should have a 'luminary'. Not being able to see how to attach a sun or a moon or a heavenly body<sup>1</sup> of any sort to a city, they have made this a marginal side-light. Neither, happily, has dropped into the bathos of seeking an official or social 'luminary' in the term. Therefore they have overworked the rendering 'light'. This has been made by them "practically equivalent" to the preceding phrase in the *Apocalypse* "having the glory of God".<sup>2</sup> A physical light becomes a religious light. This necessitates the denial that the 'light' is the same as the 'lamp' mentioned in verse twenty-three, "for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the lamp of it". An unfortunate duality of illumination is thus set up. That difficulty is, however, thrust aside by an alleged

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* LXX, Gen. i. 14, 16; Daniel xii. 3; I Esdras viii. 79; Wisdom xiii. 2; Sirach xliii. 7. Aquila, Ps. lxxiv. 16; Symmachus, Proverbs xv. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* Charles, *Comm.*, *ad. loc.* xxi. 11.

proof of the stated opinion. In chapter iv. 3 the enthroned one is said "to look like a jasper stone and a sardius". Therefore it is concluded that the light of the city is like the jasper brightness glowing in "the nimbus which surrounds the throne of God". It surely is not over-exacting to point out how roughly this view extrudes the sardius which in John's eyes was also part of the throne's light. These are small points of criticism, and so perhaps they ought to be designated. They do arise, however, from successive stages of the interpretative fitting of the term 'light' to render the Greek word *φωστήρ*. The single sound item in the whole of this view is the assertion that the use of the Greek word in xxi. 11 is "very rare". Even that item escapes the work of defining the word. We can show that it stands for the illumination and not the illuminant: the object which bears the light and not the glow it sheds. Something architectural and not that which enrobes the city. This we must find.

There is ancient Samaritan evidence<sup>1</sup> for an attempt to build, in some part of Palestine, a city of the kind which John transforms. The record says: "And they built a tower on top of the mount, and they placed on it a light and its glow could be seen from the four quarters". The Samaritan uses the Hebrew word *Sham* to describe this 'tower of light', for such it has become by the tiny change

<sup>1</sup> *Asatir*, v. 4-5. The other portions of the narrative will be treated in my fresh findings for our knowledge of the cult things which lie behind apocalyptic.

of a vowel point. Whilst the ancient Samaritan Targum to the Genesis passage, where the word appears, translates it as 'tower of light'. These citations at last give the true Semitic equivalent of *φωστήρ*. But how is it to be envisaged? Its features are three: towerlike; lit at the top and visible to the four quarters of the cosmic rectangle. Set side by side these points and the description in the *Apocalypse*: "its *tower of light* was similar to a most precious stone, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal". Is there any Greek evidence for this full rendering of the term? A unique manuscript of the *Apocalypse* treasured in the National Library at Athens, and of the eleventh century, reads *ὡς φωστήρ ἀγῆς* instead of *ἀστῆς*.<sup>1</sup> The innocuous word 'it' disappears and the significant word 'radiance' or 'light' takes its place. The Old Syriac version upholds the change. The 'tower' demands the qualitative term. Hoskier, who first drew attention to this reading, translated the sentence, "as the light-source of her radiance": which is infelicitous, of a Gnostic flavour, and misses the architectural qualities of the chief word in the sentence. To these we are led again by the Arabic annotators of the Samaritan *Asatir* who render the word by *manāna*—that is, 'light-tower'. This is the original significance of the word minaret, and we are in position to point out that its origins are most probably the same as those we have found for John's 'tower'. It will be right then to take the

<sup>1</sup> Hoskier, i. 358, ii. 589: *Cod. Athens Nat. Library*, 94 = Gregory, 105 and Hoskier, III.

Semitic lead here and render the verse again, by the help of the Athens codex: "a *tower of light* similar to a most precious stone, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal". The form of this 'tower of light', therefore, comes out to us as a tower-like shining green or red stone. A trio of fascinating writers, Pliny,<sup>1</sup> Herodotus,<sup>2</sup> and Theophrastus,<sup>3</sup> will help us to understand what was its shape and significance.

In the temple of Hercules at Tyre there was a column of emerald "large enough to shine by night". A temple of Jupiter in Egypt possessed an obelisk of four smaragdi forty cubits long and four cubits broad at one end and two cubits at the other. The engaging three could supply more of such evidence. To them let me add a delightful Semite. An early tenth-century Arab scholar in Cordova,<sup>4</sup> who knew much and preserved much ancient lore, writes in his book *The Unique Necklace*: "the height of the Sakkrah (that is, the Rock in Jerusalem, the 'Centre' of the earth) where it reached toward the sky was twelve miles high, and the people of Jericho profited by its shadow, as also did they of Emmaus; and there was set on its top a red and shining ruby, giving light even to the people of Baalbek, so that they who lived there were able to spin by its light". We have then these points for our guidance: records of tower-like luminous green stones and lore concerning the heart

<sup>1</sup> *Nat. Hist.* xxxvii. 19, 20, 37.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *De Lapidibus*, 24 f.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi, iii. 366; see Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (1890), 162.

of the *Centre*, with its wondrous height and lit stone. In the Cordovan record there can be little doubt of the substitution of the red for the green colour of the gem. We may be incredulous of these things — that is immaterial ; for the ancient world was not. It is their views which can interpret John and not ours. We commit error too when we bring the exactitude of the modern study of gems, and especially its strictures of classification, to discriminate which green stone is meant by jasper or emerald or beryl, or how the red ruby finds itself the companion jewel of the jacinth. Pliny, for instance, engagingly teaches us that a variety of stones might be put under either name. According, therefore, to ancient gem-lore and the Semitic concept of the cosmos, the *φωστήρ* was either a column of luminous green or red stone or that the ' Centre ' at its own centre was crowned with such a precious stone.<sup>1</sup> The difference between these two significances is only that the second one tells just where the architectural gem was set. As we shall see that is where John would have it placed. It is interesting to notice that the ' tower ' kept its pictorial place down to the four-

<sup>1</sup> An illustration of great gems from Jewish apocalyptic is in *Hebrew Enoch*, xxvi. 5, " the sapphire stone upon his head is as great as the whole universe, and like unto the splendour of the heavens in radiance ". The narrative is describing the head of the Seraphim. In my book on the origins of Jewish apocalyptic I shall show the rise of this column or tower of light. The variation in colour, from green to red, is certainly traceable as far back as Aristotle. His lost Greek ' Lapidary ' is found in part in the Paris MS. of Damigeron's *de Lapidibus*, fol. 186, where he speaks of the jacinth ; cf. Studer and Evans, *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries* (1924), 373. The Western Semites knew his book as witnesses a Montpellier manuscript of a Latin translation from the Arabic version.



teenth century. There is a codex of Sallust,<sup>1</sup> preserved in Venice, which is illustrated by a *mappa mundi*. That type of map, as a rule, showed Jerusalem to be the 'Centre' of the world. This one does that in a unique way. A slender, castellated square tower built upon the Rock (which as we have seen was the *Centre's* centre) with a conventional cross at each corner is named Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> The 'tower of light' upon its mount, the fabled luminous jewel, is giving place to the Light of the World. This pictorial memory of the city's heart has followed the transference of the lore of the 'Centre' from the cosmic idea to the Lamb of God. We have yet to enquire whether John did the same.

(2) *The Rectangular City, its Foundations and Gates*.—"The city lieth foursquare and its length is as great as its breadth . . . length and breadth and height are equal." If that last item of height had been omitted, we could perhaps have found help in recalling that the Babylon which Herodotus saw was a square city. Or in the fact that Akhenaton had built a city on a square plan. We might too have found a sort of abstract parallel, as do the commentators, in the Greek idea of the square as the symbol of perfection.<sup>3</sup> But John is not looking East or South of Jerusalem for a model, nor is he

<sup>1</sup> *Fonds Anc. Lat.* 432, Library of St. Mark's.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, *The Study and Classification of Mediaeval Mappae Mundi* (*Archaeologia*, 1926), Pl. viii, Fig. 2. The fact that certain *mappae* showed other places, for instance Mecca, as the 'Centre' in no wise alters the truth of my statement concerning Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 344A; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, iii. 11. 2.

adding to the evidence for the hellenisation of Palestine : he is a living Semite at work upon an alive Semitic conception. His eye is not upon what looks like the close analogy in the cosmic approximations of the earlier and less ornate Egyptian temples. In shape they were an oblong, longer than they were wide. Four pillars upheld a ceiling which, according to certain theorists, was flat like the iron sky ; or was a shallow vault, according to other views.<sup>1</sup> That would be an analogy ; since the whole of the cosmic scheme comes from the same Northern source as that of the Semites — a fact which Egyptologists have not yet recognised and for which there is fresh evidence. This fact of course is against the opinion that it is more than an analogy. John, though centuries later in Time, is nearer the source than the Egyptian temple. It is to that we must go if his city is to display the secret of its planning. The primary embodiments of that conception of the universe is known to us. Its unilateral type, celestially, is alike Ezekiel's throne ; and terrestrially, alike the throne in the Dura synagogue. There is abundant Hebrew evidence for that fact ; and as well for the rectangular shape of the earth. Then that shape presupposes a quadrilateral type. There are four quarters to the cosmic idea ; therefore that type is beyond dispute. To enlarge the scope of Semitic evidence for this truth, we may use two Arabic pieces. The first of them says that when the four-sided foundation of the primal 'sanctuary' was laid Adam put upon it a great square hyacinth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maspero, *Manual of Egyptian Archaeology* (1914), 70.

stone.<sup>1</sup> The second says that its celestial counterpart was of the square foundation and upon it were raised four pillars of emerald, and again at its centre the hyacinth or jacinth stone.<sup>2</sup> In the loose Semitic classification of precious stones, this crowning jacinth was of a green colour. That these two are parallels with what we have found concerning the 'tower of light' is indisputable. That we are at last in possession of John's architectural datum is equally outside dispute. John's datum then is a square cosmos. It must have four gates of the winds or it could not represent the cosmos. Let these be set, three of these squares side by side, in the four sides of the rectangular cosmos — and his city is complete with tower aglow with its traditional light.

The *Books of Enoch*,<sup>3</sup> for example, have just such a cosmic scheme — four-sided with three gates of the winds on each of its sides. That is a document whose date is not long after that of the *Apocalypse*.<sup>4</sup> John is not derivative. He is original. *Enoch* is creating and transforming nothing. The apocryphon is only an echo, or series of echoes. Whilst John is originating a city beautiful. He is not even drawing from Ezekiel xlviii. 31 to 35, though that writer names his gates after the tribes of Israel and associates his city with the ancient cosmic conception, as he would have to do being a

<sup>1</sup> Azraqi, 12 (Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 1858, i.); Wensinck, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Azraqi, *supra*; Wensinck, 50.

<sup>3</sup> xxiv.-xxvi., lxxvi. 1 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Charles' dates are too early. Cf., e.g., Gaster, *Asatir*, 107, "they will have to undergo a very serious revision".

Semite and an apocalypticist. He is replanning Jerusalem from a priestly point of view. The result is that the Ezekiel apocalypse completes in detail what the Zechariah apocalypse sketches in two verses. He has worked according to the schedule of Jewish apocalyptic for the Day of Tabernacles. Whereas John has taken the cosmic inspirations of the Semitic Folk-mind, which shape the apocalyptic of that Day, and has transformed them and not merely a city of Jerusalem. What hitherto has been the immutable 'Centre' of the earth, the heart of the city and of Folk-religion, has been made new. He is not limited to recreating a city. That is the work of apocalyptic. His design is to put into words the recreation of the cosmos whose 'Centre' is a city. "I saw a new sky and a new earth. . . . I saw the new Jerusalem." Let me digress for a moment to point out that what John saw was 'a new sky'. It is in the interests of the cosmos which filled his mind and of exact exegesis that we should rid English renderings of these chapters of the word 'heaven'. That is a religious word. John is using a cosmical word. Charles admits the religious barbarism 'the heaven' into very many pages of his commentary. That is even less desirable than the phrase 'a new heaven'. It is an attempt to literalise the Greek article and to moralise its noun. It succeeds in not rendering John. 'Sky' is his word. Then, the major influences which caused the Folk-mind to think in apocalyptic terms, these are they John is striving with that the message of his book might be, 'Lo, these are made

new'. It will be shown that these very important conclusions are exact ones, when we treat of the external features of John's Jerusalem.

Did the apocalyptist imitate Isaiah or Tobit in using jewels for his foundations and gates? The Isaian <sup>1</sup> bejewelling of Jerusalem comes in a quick and slight reference. The prophet promises to reset the afflicted city with foundations of sapphires and windows of rubies and gates of carbuncles. Tobit <sup>2</sup> is more detailed. The battlemented walls are to be of pure gold and the carbuncles of Ophir are for the paving of Jerusalem. The view has been built on these analogies with the *Apocalypse* that the nature of John's city was "thoroughly material"; <sup>3</sup> and therefore it could only mean that he was describing a city which should pass away with the Millennial Kingdom. Isaiah and Tobit are certainly utilising the same source as John. They in the manner of Jewish apocalypses: John in that of the *Apocalypse*. The Tradition of Jewish apocalyptic evidently inspired the transference of jewels from the 'Centre' (or throne <sup>4</sup> or sanctuary as it was variously described) to Jerusalem. That appears to be an inevitable conclusion from both the Jewish and Johannine sides. A notable representa-

<sup>1</sup> liv. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> xiii. 16 f. There is no call for the view that John's use of the jewels was a retrieval of the vision of Baruch, *Apocalypse*, vi. 7, 9, 10—i.e. the jewels have been retrieved from the earth because 'Jerusalem is restored for ever'.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, *Lectures*, 14 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e.g., *Hebrew Enoch*, xix. 2, where the 'Chariot' is moved by the four winds; xlv. 2, where it is said to be a four-sided throne; *Exodus Rabba*, iii. 3.

tive of the former is the *Apocalypse of Moses*.<sup>1</sup> Its vision of another city causes a multiplication of jewelled thrones. It has no regard for gates and walls. That it is transferring the 'throne' as the 'Centre' with its jewels is proved by the fact that four streams issue from beneath the thrones. What then other apocalyptists, Isaiah and Tobit, did was to make a simple transference of unearthly jewels to an earthly city, which was to be perfect in Jahvistic devotion. In the instance of the *Moses* apocalypse that vision may have grown dim; hence the jewelled 'throne' was made into many for the delectation of patriarchs and saints; or, as is more likely, it was moved by the older cosmic things which were greater than a city. Thus Jewish apocalyptic was shaping the motive which John was to utilise as a Christian apocalyptist. The *Apocalypse of Moses* could make but small use of it, and that away from the haunts of men and women; whilst the *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* was to make the fullest use of it among them. For John saw Revealer and revelation remaking the cosmos. He, as a spectator, made record of the fact. Neither John nor his fellow apocalyptists are engaged in mere decorative work when using these jewels, either of an architectural or moral sort, as a number of commentators allege.

Did John borrow from Exodus or Ezekiel when he sought jewels for his foundations? From neither. John went to the sources of both. We have to recall that he was working sensitively in the full context

<sup>1</sup> c. 57 ff. John is not rebuilding an astral symbol of the cosmos; cf. Boll, 39 f.; Lohmeyer, 167.

of the saga of *the Man*. In it, as early Semitic evidence<sup>1</sup> has preserved, Adam is made wise by an oracular 'book', so it is called, composed of twelve precious stones. This is handed down to the successors of *the Man*. The high-priest in Exodus and the king of Tyre in Ezekiel are wearing more ancient regalia than we have thought. What were its original values is a question which does not belong to our present subject. All that is necessary now is to realise that the jewels John uses are from the treasury of the Tradition of apocalyptic. Thence the pentateuchal and prophetic writers took them. The three orders of writers, each in his own fashion, are swayed by the Folk-saga. And each sets the jewels according to the sway of the idea and ideal which dominate his book.

Whence came John's gates of 'a single pearl'? It has been argued that these phenomenal stones are a count in the argument, that John when creating an earthly city put aside the mythical city of the gods. Since that was not his occupation, it will be best to abandon both symbolical and theoretical treatment of these jewels. The reason that satisfies, when we ask why John used those huge pearls, is that contemporary tales say such gems were to be put into the Temple. John took them, and used them in his new world where there could be no temple. The *Pesikta rabbati*<sup>2</sup> tells how the famous Rabbi

<sup>1</sup> *Asatir*, ii. 7. The Samaritan evidence is coloured by the later astrological value which was given to the early oracular gems; cf. Eupolemos in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* ix. 17.

<sup>2</sup> I owe the reference to Dr. Morgenstern, *H.U.C.A.* (1929), 23/43, who has several others.

Yohanan was expounding Isaiah liv. 12. And that he went on to declare that in the days to come Jahweh would make the Temple gates of one precious stone. A hearer objected. Afterwards he was sailing in a vessel which sank. On the floor of the sea he saw angels at work with tools upon a single pearl. When he asked what they were fashioning, he was told the great gate of the Temple. The simple adoption of a contemporary Temple tradition, that he might use it for his templeless cosmos, is in harmony with all our findings on John's methods of composition. The burden of his book manifests his awareness of things in the world about him. That is one of the secrets of its alive quality. And the point of his usage authenticates the deed as being his own. Thus the materials and methods of transmutation — the creation of a cosmic city or a cosmos whose 'Centre' is a city — are his by claims of birthright as a Semite and by virtue of his discipleship to Jesus Christ, a combination which could and did appear in others but coming in him has such personal quality as to demand the designation, Johannine.

The exterior features of his work are not less individual. "A river of water of life" flowing from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb. Just a touch and the water which was for the fertilisation of Palestine becomes the water of life to men and women. When Jewish apocalyptic made the river come from beneath the 'Tree of Life' or from under the thrones of the patriarchs, as in the *Apocalypse of Moses*, it was but the apparition of the water which had flowed to irrigate the fields and vineyards of



Palestine. John the Semite uses the 'Centre' of the festivals: John the Christian, by a turn of speech, causes the water of the revelation of Jesus Christ to go out to mankind. A second feature — "and on this side of the river and on that was a tree of life". That is not Genesis. John has turned once more to the Tradition of his craft. And again he has shown us that the Tradition was conscious of Subaraean things down to his own time. Père Dhorme<sup>1</sup> has made it clear that in the early Chaldean celestial view of these trees there were two: the 'Tree of Life' and the 'Tree of Truth', and each was set on either side of the river in the sky. These two trees also stood near the entrance to the temple of the sky. The Tradition of apocalyptic would not go back to the sources the Assyriologist uses. It was mediated for John and his source through the Subaraean experience of the Israelites. The opinion of the discoverer of that ancient culture is final when he says: "the idea of the Tree of life comes not from Sumer, but from the Subaraean culture-complex".<sup>2</sup> Our apocalypticist assures us that the Tradition had kept the memory of the two trees, for the life which his trees bear for the healing of the nations is the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Examine the remarkable portions of the *Apocalypse* as we may, we come upon the fact, which alone illumines John's achievement, that he is overthrowing Jewish apocalyptic by means of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Revue Biblique* (1907), 272 ff.; cf. Van Buren, *Iraq* (1934), i. 1, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Von Oppenheim, 167.

One other feature of and a question concerning this cosmos with its city 'Centre', before we turn to educe the full significance of that achievement. "And night shall not be any more." Two opposite opinions are held concerning this statement: that it has verbal predecessors in Isaiah lx. 19 and Psalm cxviii. 27, and that it had no such predecessor in the Old Testament. But the Isaian passage makes no mention of the night. Its choice, on the part of John, would mean that he had ruminated on the material of the Old Testament for the substance of the *Apocalypse*, rather than handle the stuff of apocalyptic. Such a view is a return to John the maker of literary mosaics. It is hoped that John the apocalypticist is so firmly established that John the mosaic-worker will be heard of no more. The suggestion of source in Psalm cxviii. 27 is a subtler one. The words read, "The Lord is God, he hath given us light". They are looked upon as a shortened form of the priest's blessing in Numbers vi. 25, "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee". The fifth verse of chapter xxii is epitomised in accord with the psalm and Numbers: "The Lord God shall cause his face to shine upon thee"—a suggestion which seems somewhat paraphrastic of a clause in that verse, "for the Lord God shall give thee light". This is no better help for the understanding of the whole verse than to be told that, of course, night and need of light could not be where God is. This pietism is an obvious suggestion; but the others are not so and are unwanted. The alternative opinion that

John had no literary predecessor for his statement is inaccurate. In the Lction for Tabernacles, we read, "it shall be one day, not day and night. Yea, at eventide it shall be light".<sup>1</sup> Again on turning to the Hallel, which was specially sung at Tabernacles, we read, "Jahweh is God and hath given us light" (Psalm cxviii. 27). That declaration precedes a cardinal ritual direction which has become incorporated in the psalm. This means, "in other words", as the late Dr. Thackeray sensitively pointed out, "He has by some dazzling display of light manifested his acceptance of the sacrifice upon the altar". This light, then, is sign of the highest moment in Tabernacles ritual. The altar heralds the day of perpetual light descried by the apocalypse of the festival. It is the Tradition after all which is John's predecessor with the dream of a nightless day. He has done with this motive from Tabernacles something after the example of his Master. Jesus took the light of a festival and transmuted it thus: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (Jn. viii. 12). His disciple has pictured the transfiguration of the cosmos by the revelation of that Light. And once again, in an exquisite way, John's loyalty is shown to the temporal rubric of his book.

There remains the question concerning John's new world. Why did the angel with the golden rod measure the city from East to South and from North to West? John appears to have had two reasons.

<sup>1</sup> Zech. xiv. 8; Thackeray, 66 and 76.

There is a Semitic and a Christian reason ; a solar which is also a festal reason and another from the revelation of Him who was the " true light ". The *Talmud*<sup>1</sup> informs us that the four geographical directions are found in this way. From the point in the month Tammuz where the sun rises to the point where it rises in Tebet is the East. From the point in the month Tebet where the sun sets to that where it sets in Tammuz is the West. Between these two are North and South. The Talmudists were speaking of the Summer and Winter solstices. Then the sun made its way to the highest point of its setting and to the lowest point of its rising : a progress which when carried out in diagrammatic form yields a rectangular scheme of directions. These then are the ways the angel followed.

That is one half of the matter. Certain scholars<sup>2</sup> have shown that in their statement the Talmudists had involved the doings of the sun on the days of the Spring and Winter equinoxes. For they go on to discuss the difficulty the early prophets had in so forming the East gate of the Temple that, on those days, the sun should directly shine through it. The early rabbinical scholars have conflated the finding of the four quarters at the solstices with an older tradition concerning the sun at the equinoxes : a subject of cosmic topography with another of solar cult and the Temple's orientation. The latter problem could arise in an acute manner on two days

<sup>1</sup> *Erubin* (Jerus.), v. 22c.

<sup>2</sup> Charlier, *Zeitschrift Deutsche Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 1904), 386 ff. ; Morgenstern, *H.U.C.A.* (1929), 16 ff.

in the Jewish year, New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement. Those two festivals coincide with the equinoctial days.

It will be noticed that once more these festal days shade into the Day which dominates John's mind and book. That is a structural requirement as other evidence has shown. Further the angel with the golden rod pursues the traditional method of plotting out the square of the cosmos. For John, then, the angel's direction must be put alongside his later declarations, " And I saw no temple therein "; again, " And the city had no need of the sun ". Semite and Christian are interworking here as everywhere. Apocalyptic once more gives way to its conqueror, and in such manner that both conquest and result might steal with naturalness into Semitic minds. Here too is another proof of the nature of John's response to a few simple sources so that the high moments of his book are achieved with an art which is without artifice. In the Zechariah apocalypse for the Day, Jerusalem is all Temple : in the *Apocalypse* there is none. John has to express that and the four-square cosmos in an apocalyptic way. He is not arguing cosmology or Temple architecture and orientation : he is wooing men and women from apocalyptic. He does that so that they may move away from ancestral thought as those who wonderingly say, ' we saw these things in that way but now we see the other side of them '.

From the first to the last chapter, argument and evidence have accumulated for a native view of the *Apocalypse* rather than an imported one.

That John must be allowed to be himself and the book itself, or we shall continue to nullify both by turning him into an eschatologist and his book into an unsurpassed exercise in oracular futility. Take the opinion of the most imposing commentary, as to erudition and scale, in English on the subject: "The forecast of our author, however, was no more realised than numbers of the detailed prophecies of the Old Testament. But though this element in his prophecy failed to be fulfilled, the larger spiritual truth embodied in his prophecy — that the kingdoms of this world would become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ — is true for all time and all like crises in human affairs. While the human element falls away the divine remains."<sup>1</sup> What is that but pious futility? On this view, the aim of this Christian book fails. Its secondary purpose, that of prophesying events in the history of nations, also comes to nought. Then says this view, put these things aside and thrust the whole book on to the Calendar where "tomorrow and tomorrow stretch a grey unbroken line of shore". If such were John's inner feeling concerning his achievement, it can be called magnificent but it is very futile.

Now the application of Anthropology to the study of the *Apocalypse* releases the book from this notion of prophecy and the tyranny of the Calendar. Apocalyptic judgements, it points out, are not prophecies. The mechanic of Nature judgements must go on if festivals and apocalyptic are their

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Comm.* ii. 456 ff.

sponsors. Such judgements belong to the Folk-religion of Palestine, its crops and vineyards and its men as favoured or unfavoured with corn and wine. John's use of these factors is strictly in keeping with apocalyptic art. Their repetitions would show that if nothing else. Anthropology has done another great service to the *Apocalypse*, it has demonstrated that the wings of written apocalyptic are time-rhythms. They find written expression in an apocalyptic idiom of time-lengths. For the Semitic mind these served a profounder purpose than metre in historical saga. They beat themselves out in the intelligence of the simplest folk and do not await the appreciation of the cultured ear. The recurring cycles of the festivals; the apocalypses of the synagogal Lectionary; the living bond between Folk-saga, festal judgements, and the ways of Jahweh with men — the inwreathed factors of the Tradition of apocalyptic: these all ministered to their undying and dramatic play in the Semitic mind. When we analyse for their mental and neural effects, and strive to conceive how these could be most truly expressed, we shall conclude that the time-rhythm is their only accurate and essential idiom. For the *Apocalypse* itself, these findings overthrow the reign of an almanac of the End. The book becomes apocalyptic at last in ideas and structure. John is no more an ancestor of Mother Shipton: he is a Semitic apocalypticist who is also a disciple set upon a very sensitive apprehension of the revelation of his Lord.

He has helped to transform the Semitic idea of the cosmos ; and that find too is a contribution of Anthropology. John has transmuted into Christian values the very foundation of apocalyptic. That is its abrogation. It is no more. It passed with Death and his surrogates. That abrogation was not done with explosive *anti-Judaica*, but with exquisite alchemy of thought. John has taken the Tradition of apocalyptic, and especially as this ruled men's minds at Tabernacles. He has followed every curve of its hold upon the Semitic mind, and with the rise and dip of each he had infolded the liberating influences of the revelation of Jesus Christ. John has carried out, so to say, a brilliant adventure at the bidding of what he had learnt from the Revealer. He related the revelation with the very presence of the Lord and set them over against the things of Jewish apocalyptic, its moral and psychological hold on the personalities of men and women. The result was as had been promised : the Revealer destroyed its foundations and superstructure, but in such a way as to give most complete yet gentle liberation from them. The radical Semiticism of it all has been wooed to discipleship unto Life.

We moderns must not suppose that thus the *Apocalypse* has a local outlook. That its speech is a dialect. We still are profoundly of the ancient world, whatever our nation, in our allegiance to the same tyrannies unto death and our dalliance towards the direct transmutative energies of the revelation of Life. John demonstrates their impact.



The ancient cosmos was made new. That was done within the framework of one Jewish day of festival. What wonders could be done with the enthronement of that Person over against the total conditions of the human world ! It is this which passes into hope in the close of John's book. Not a dateless End of things : not a Coming "on some far-off aeonian morning". The text of its close is rather ragged. Some of it reads as if the book were to be treated like a magical papyrus. John's signature is not on those verses. Linguistic tests are supposed to have claimed most of the matter as his. They, however, are not impeccable. The hesitant and refluent material, in verses ten to nineteen, proffers of itself the view that John would not have thus closed the *Apocalypse*. There is no place for disillusionment in him. No nostalgia for the historic Person as He was in the day of Galilee ; since for him the *Parousia* of the revelation meant the Presence of the historic Revealer. His aspiration is for the enthronement of Presence and Person over the whole of existence.

We must return from the broad things of summing-up to details. John's positive achievements steal out to us in the course of his work. They do not project themselves as doctrines. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." The historic revelation is quoted. Not at length but almost by shy allusion. Yet it is the heart of Jesus' transfiguration of the material of Tabernacles. That we have seen. It is also more than this. Turn once again to the

Fourth Gospel and to chapter iv. Jesus is talking with the woman of Samaria. His sayings about the Water of Life link at once with the *Apocalypse*. That is not all. Gerizim,<sup>1</sup> like Jerusalem, was once a famous 'Centre' of the earth. The woman refers to that fact (Jn. iv. 20). Jesus' answer to her, that neither in this mountain nor in that of Jerusalem shall men worship, shows that He is aware of the 'Centre' concept.<sup>2</sup> His revelation will sweep both away. He of course has anticipated John. The apocalyptist could have written only cosmic or water mysticism if Jesus had not revealed these things. It is appropriate also that we should ask further aid from this narrative of the Samaritan woman, for it will enable us to make union between its thought and another pervading idea of the *Apocalypse*. "I know that the Taheb cometh: when he is come he will declare unto us all things" — a reply on the woman's part which is spoilt by obvious gloss in the Greek text. The Taheb, which is the name for the Samaritan Anointed One, is a bringer-in of the Law.<sup>3</sup> That is also the basal idea in the Hebrew conception of a Messiah. Both connote another Moses. We have found that the *Amen* name is borne by Him who surpasses Moses and who brings in the New Law. Jesus explained to one woman, "I that speak unto thee am he".

<sup>1</sup> *Asatir*, i. 7, ii. 38 ff., v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel: Interpreted in Relation to Contemporaneous Religions Current in Palestine and the Hellenistic World* (1929), 187; whose Semitic industry has not yet included the 'Centre' concept and is uncertain as to Samaritan ideas in chapter iv.

<sup>3</sup> See Gaster, *Samaritan Eschatology* (1932), i. 224 ff.

The apocalypticist has caused Him to speak thus to the whole Semitic world and its deepest beliefs. This is another typical instance of Johannine workmanship; of the following of the inmost curves of the Semitic Folk-mind and of the informing of them with the truth which makes men free. It is this which is subversive of apocalyptic.

A second instance of this effective craftsmanship is in the statement, "And there shall be no curse any more". The Greek of the sentence is identical with that of Zechariah xiv. 11. There identity ends. Zechariah is thinking of the freedom of his city from festal judgement. John is considering the Tree of Life. The former is concerned with the realisation of a Tabernacles apocalypse: the latter with a new cosmos. Both are working within a Tabernacles context as to time. But the Zechariah apocalypse dreams only of a ritual end, a Jerusalem of perfect Jahvistic worship. John has struck down to the origins of festival and ritual. He has gone back to revive from the Tradition the Subaraean picture of trees and river; and then the Revealer removes the curse which is upon the Garden in its Genesis presentation. We must not forget that the Garden is a part of the 'Centre' conception, delectable and well-watered land which belongs to the Semitic idea of the cosmos. Death has been cast out; therefore the curse is no more. Nothing is more evident than this that we do not yet comprehend that in the first century the revelation of Jesus Christ has made this most revolutionary achievement. No one must rise, however, in the name of

fourth-century theology and cry: 'if this be so, John is a sentimental universalist'. Such a cry forgets that he was not of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Never was cosmic city more closely guarded than that of the *Apocalypse*. There are those who are within and those who are without. The divisive criterion is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Men follow the Way of Life or the Way of Death. That is the ruling ethic of the city. Once again, the craftsmanship is as sure and simple as ever. It achieves with mastery on the two planes, the Semitic and the Christian. As life in a plant breaks into natural flower, so the Life effloresces in John's refined and truthful handling of Semitic things.

It was also like him to explain that he was not a lonely craftsman. Through an "angel" he makes it clear that he is one with the "brethren that hold the witness of Jesus" — that is of the historical showing and speaking of the revelation. Then John moves on to make what might perhaps be called the sole definition in his book: "the witness of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (xix. 10) — a striking statement, that is a better word than the scholastic one 'definition', which links up another in the close of the *Apocalypse*, "the Lord, the God of the prophets" (xxii. 6). These two declarations must mean the same thing. If the revelation of Jesus is the Πνεῦμα of the new prophecy; then He is the Lord and God of the spirits of the new prophets. These are names of the *Amen* in a fresh context. What first century thought or apocalyptic brought

together twentieth century theology ought not to put asunder. To call in a flight of angelic spirits to inspire those prophets, as do Bousset and Moffatt and more confusedly Charles, is to Enochise and not to Christianise the *Apocalypse*. Thus are ignored two cardinal matters of first century technique. First, in the making of a witness of Jesus he was taught the great simplicities of the revelation before he went on his mission ; and second, in the making of a Christian apocalypse it was filled with the triumphing life and light of the revelation, without which it could neither be Christian nor an apocalypse. The first Epistle to Timothy iii. 13 and 16<sup>1</sup> exemplifies the first order of technique by preserving a formula for messengers ; and the *Apocalypse* is the remarkable example of the second order. The *Didache*<sup>2</sup> requires that the prophet should have the manners and message of the Lord. It is most evident that John has both requirements, since the manners come out in the delightful solitudes of the evangelism which shine through his workmanship. To depict the revelation of Jesus at its work of overthrowing apocalyptic is to give practical expression to the Evangel, and that is what Christian apocalyptic is and does.

Our findings for John's book issue in a threefold plea. First, for the beginnings of the emancipation of the *Apocalypse* ; second, for the real understanding of Jewish apocalyptic ; third, for fresh enquiry

<sup>1</sup> Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (1913), has propounded a too learned and foreign idea of such preparation and equipment.

<sup>2</sup> xi. 3 ff.

into the genius of Christian thought. For the *Apocalypse* itself they ask a total revision of accepted ideas. For Jewish apocalyptic, a large revision of received ideas. For Christian thought, a renewal of sensitiveness towards the powers of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The evidence for the first two phases of this plea is in all the work which has been done. John shifts the axis of the Semitic mind by the help of the revelation. We do hurt to this achievement if, when we think of the term Semitic in that claim, we go on to think that the *Apocalypse* can have little or no concern for us. The fundamental tendencies of the Western mind are as near as can be *replicae* of those of the Semitic mind. The message of the *Apocalypse* can do for us, and is needed to do what it did for those to whom it was first sent. The revelation through it can revolutionise our innate apocalypticism. But what of Christian thought?

The whole of the work we have done demonstrates that it is by the revelation that apocalyptic is overthrown. Plan and structure of the *Apocalypse* are controlled and shaped by that creative idea. Let it be unrecognised, the book falls back into what the earliest Patristic writers made of it, no matter how we may trick out their views with accumulated learning. The book then stultifies both John and his Lord. Let the creative idea be recognised, John becomes an extraordinary instrument for exhibiting the transforming energies of the revelation. Paul has done this also ; and his work has an endearing

quality, it shows a great human being striving after discipleship to the Revealer. John accomplishes with a singular directness and surety of touch. He was always sure of the energies and their transforming potencies. He was not concerned with the total work of the revelation in human personalities, and what were its laws and ways when humans were "members one of another" in this or that Christian society. That was Paul's arduous task. The fact that John was absorbed with the basal and energetic things of the Semitic Folk-mind lent him simplicity of apprehension. He saw these things being done. His pen was obedient to the immediate experience. The revelation was the Presence, the *Parousia*; since for John it was the utterance of the Living God. Therefore its action was kinetic, everywhen and everywhere.

It has been said already that the *Parousia* concept is no foreign importation among the ideas controlling the *Apocalypse*. Throughout the book the revelation is present in the Revealer, John's *Son of the Man*. In the first chapter we read, "his eyes were as a flame of fire . . . and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his face was as the sun shining in his strength". When the Word of God sets out to the War of the Ways John writes, "his eyes are a flame of fire . . . and out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword". And in the new world we learn, "the Lamb is its lamp". These are notes of the surpassing of the highest hope of the Feast of Tabernacles. Then the pilgrims to the festival hoped to

see the shining of the *Shekinah*, the 'presence' or the 'face' as is the description in the appointed psalm for the Day. Other passages in the Old Testament and in one of the Targums<sup>1</sup> make this equivalence between the three terms. The *Shekinah* meant the divine presence. Its manifestation was to be a physical one. On John's Day, which surpassed that of Tabernacles, there was also this profounder advance — the hope of the appearance of Jahweh among the grapes, or upon the 'Centre' of Jerusalem, was changed into the real presence of the historic revelation and Revealer, the Light of Life. Gone were the judgements by natural phenomena which might or might not be executed. There was now only discipleship unto Life for men and women. The quest for rain was turned into the actual gift of the Water of Life.

John's demonstrated conclusions are irresistible in their truth. Where such a revelation is being spoken men and the world are transformed. It would be as ridiculous, in idea and delay, for him to wait until some hidden End of things, for the birth of "a new man in Jesus Christ" as for a new world. The Presence of the revelation makes both new; and both by means of the Way of Life. For John, then, the revelation was not dogma — which is what it becomes when it is a minor tributary in Western theologies; nor ethics out of the blue for dwellers in the blue — which is the view of much

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii. 14-15; Num. vi. 25; Deut. xxxi. 17-18; *Targum Jonathan*, Ps. xvi. 8, lxxxix. 47; Lamentations ii. 19; Song of Songs vi. 1. Cf. Blau, *Jewish Ency.* xi. 259



recent moral philosophy. It was the God of Life and Truth who was so believed in that His Presence recreated human beings and the world imprisoned within the context of old-world ideas and spirituality.

John knew and demonstrated that the triumphs of the revelation were within. We look for them in the without of things. Because the whole scheme of the world appears to be intractable to paradisaic change, we put off the day of its reformation. We juggle with the myth of the Golden Age or with the latest hypothesis of Physics as to an end of the present earth. Or we identify our ephemeral readings of civilisation and its future with an abstraction we call the Kingdom. What we generally mean by it is the accomplishment or defeat of our hopes, pathetic and ghostly things coloured by natural religion. The society which Jesus created and creates, of men and women who are alive by and unto His revelation, is deposed or ignored as something which might have belonged to the first century.

Do we realise that either gesture leads us back to the spiritual enslavements of the ancient world? Whereas, all the while, the revelation waits to have its energies applied to the manifold problems of men. And John is one of the early witnesses who, having understood Jesus, can tell us something of what He and they can do, on any day, for men and the world.



## SECTION V

A FRESH RENDERING OF JOHN'S BOOK



## A FRESH RENDERING OF JOHN'S BOOK

IN the biography of Tennyson we are told that he thought some things in the English to be finer than in the Greek version of John's book. It is a correct comment. Certain turns of speech do ring with Elizabethan sonority. Their analogues have as little music as the Greek of a Byzantine chronicle. Still, the least intriguing of them for the ear is charged with a dramatic energy which the familiar renderings fail to bring out. That could not be said of John Malalas. The repetitions of its original text are tragedies *in posse*. Its temporal idiom, for instance, often contrives a 'curtain', with power to solace or to terrify human beings, beyond the craft of any playwright. We have found that the substance of the book is a transcript of the mental drama of a people. It has been played on the stage of the mind, which author-like assumes a dominant rôle in the play, since the beginnings of Israel's history.

John replays that drama on two stages: the Semitic and the Christian. This is done at the same moment; and the stages are to one another as are the lobes of the brain. His skill as the bearer of the most dramatic of messages has been the main subject of our study. Therefore we have no call to

question the setting of the *Revelation of Jesus Christ* in a form assaying to exhibit the replay of the Semitic drama, which is the result of the age-long influences of Apocalyptic ; and the interplay of the Christian message, which is the creation of the Revealer's transmutation of that Apocalyptic. Were this unusual form in need of defence, we might fruitfully offer these important considerations : (1) A dramatic setting of John's book can bring home directly to the Western mind the genius of Apocalyptic and of the Christian message. (2) This setting can lead readers to the natural interpretation of the whole of his book. (3) It shows us the literary unity of John's work. (4) It impresses upon us, as any other method cannot, the splendid purposefulness of the book. (5) By its means we are able to realise the remarkable deftness of John's workmanship, both as apocalyptist and messenger. (6) It aids us to appreciate the outstanding pragmatic fact of the first-century message — that the *presence* of the Revealer on the earth and in the immortal revelation brought Life at once to men and the world, when and where faith in Him is manifested.

# THE WAR OF THE TWO WAYS

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE REVEALER.

JOHN : *a Semite who is a Christian.*

*Winds ; Presbyters ; Star-angels ; Voices ; Messengers, etc.*

DEATH.

*Surrogates of DEATH and his hosts.*

### *Scene*

Island of Patmos.

i. 9

### *Time*

The *Red Day*, which is the day of the Festival of the Tabernacles.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

i. 1

## EPISODE I

JOHN is seen ready to write. He is seated facing the Lydian coast. His attitude tells us that all his senses are very awake. Behind him are hill-tops which look like the supports of the sky-tent of the universe. From beneath them flows the water for the physical life of man, the fields and the vines. He is speaking as if to a great audience.

i. 4-8

JOHN : To the Christians in Lydia and Mysia, and through them to the whole Near Eastern world : Grace to you and peace from the I am, the I was and the I shall be ; from Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the First-born out of the place of the dead, and the Over-lord of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loveth us, and looseneth us from our sins in his blood, and made us the deathless community, priests to God and his Father ; to him, the glory and the power unto the ages of the ages, The Amen. Lo, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him ; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn for him ; yea, The Amen : who is the Alpha and the Omega ; the Lord ; the God ; the I am ; the I was ; the I shall be ; the Almighty.

i. 12 ff.

(THE REVEALER *appears. Before the picture of the ancient idea of the cosmos which Patmos makes is set the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum. The Son of the Man, which is one of THE REVEALER'S great names, is clothed to the foot and girt with gold at the breasts. His hair is like white snow ; and his eyes as a flame of fire. His feet are as shining and refined brass. In his right hand are seven stars. His face is lit like the eastern sun at midday. From his lips proceeds the sword of his revelation borne by a voice which sounds like moving waters. JOHN falls at his feet as if he were one in the place of the dead.*)

i. 17-20

THE REVEALER (*laying his right hand upon*



JOHN) : Fear not : I am the First and the Last ; the Living One ; I became dead, and lo, I am alive immortally, and I have the keys of Death who is Hades. Write what you see : the things which are and shall be. Write of the seven stars upon My right hand, and the menorah. You know that they are star-angels and they will fly to the seven gatherings of my disciples.

(JOHN is now standing, and the Semite in him is deeply interested at the mention of the star-angels. He watches these apocalyptical postmen waiting to be sent off the hand of THE REVEALER, like a star and a wheel with a glimpse of a face in the lambent light.)

JOHN (*murmuring a Jewish hymn as he watches*) : *Odes of Solomon, xxiii. 5 ff*  
 " His thoughts were like a letter. His will came from on high, and it was sent like an arrow which is powerfully shot from above . . . a wheel received it and carried it." It was always like that.

(*Then a bright star-angel leapt from His hand to Ephesus.*)

FIRST STAR-ANGEL : Thus speaks He holding *ii. 1 ff.*  
 the seven stars in His right hand and walking in the midst of the seven golden lights : I know thy works, and thy toil and thy patience, and that thou canst not away with false men and didst expose their falsity as apostles ; and thou hast patience and didst gallantly and not wearily for My name's sake. But I have against thee that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember then whence thou art fallen, and turn your mind again to do the just things ; or else

I come to thee, and will move thy light from its place, if thou turnedst not thy mind again. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of retrograde sects, which I also hate. Let the quick ear hear what The Revealer saith to the churches. To the conquering one, I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in God's Eden.

*(Another star-angel shone from His hand to Smyrna.)*

ii. 8 ff.

SECOND STAR-ANGEL : Thus saith the First and the Last who became as a dweller in the place of the dead and lived : I know thy tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich ; and I know the blasphemy of those calling themselves Jews and are nothing but a synagogue of Satan. Fear not the things which you will suffer tomorrow. Behold, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that ye may be tested and have a tribulation for a while. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. Listen to what The Revealer saith to the churches. The conquering one shall be scathless of the second death.

*(An apocalyptic letter-carrier flashed to Pergamos.)*

ii. 12 ff.

THIRD STAR-ANGEL : Thus saith He having the sharp two-edged sword of the revelation : I know where thou art housed, where is the throne of Satan ; and thou art loyal to my name, and deniedst not my faith even in the days of Antipas my witness and faithful follower, who was killed among you in Satan's dwelling-place. But I have somewhat against thee, that certain hold the teaching of

Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling-block before the children of Israel to eat idols' food and to fornicate. So also others likewise hold the teaching of retrograde sects. Turn again your minds, therefore, or I come to thee quickly, and I will war against them with the sword of My revelation. Churches, be attentive to The Revealer. To the conquering one I will give of the treasured manna, and I will give him a white token and written upon it a new name, which no one knows but the recipient.

*(Another star-angel leapt from His hand to Thyatira.)*

FOURTH STAR-ANGEL : Thus saith the Son of 11. 18 ff. God, having eyes with oracular fire and feet like unto shining brass : I know thy works, and thy love and faith and service and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first. But I have this against thee that thou dost tolerate the woman Jezebel, a self-styled prophetess ; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to fornicate and eat idols' food. And I gave her time to change her mind ; and she willeth not to do so. Lo, I cast her into a bed, and them who are adulterous with her into great tribulation, unless they turn their minds again from their works. I will kill her children with Death ; and all the churches shall know that I am the Searcher of the inner man, and I will give to each according to your works. But I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, so many as have not this teaching, which know not the mysteries of Satan, as they call them : another burden I cast not upon

you. Be loyal till I come to what you hold. And the conquering one, my leal man to the end, to him I will give kingship over the nations : and he shall rule them with iron sceptre, as clay vessels are broken into shreds—even as a surrogate of My authority. I will also give him the Morning Star. Listen to The Revealer, O community of His.

*(Unto Sardis He sends another star-angel from His hand.)*

iii. 1 ff.

FIFTH STAR-ANGEL : Thus speaketh He having the seven spirits of God and the seven star-angels : I know thy works, thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Become a watchman, and tend the residue which is dying away ; for I have not found thy works perfected before the face of my God. Remember then how thou hast received and heard ; and retain it and turn your minds about. If then thou wilt not be this watchman, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour when I will steal upon thee. But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not befoul their garments : and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. The conquering one thus shall be clad in white garments, and I will not blot his name from the book of life, but I will celebrate his name before the face of My Father and of his messengers. Hear the message of The Revealer to the churches.

*(A post-messenger like a starry chariot left His hand for Philadelphia.)*

iii. 7 ff.

SIXTH STAR-ANGEL : Thus speaks the Holy, the True, the Holder of David's key, who openeth and none shall shut and shutteth and none openeth : I

know thy works that thou hast small power and didst keep My word and deniedst not My name ; lo, I have given before thee an open and unshutable door. I give them of the synagogue of Satan, who calling themselves Jews do lie, that they come and worship before thy feet and know that I have loved thee. Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will withhold thee from the hour of temptation coming upon the world of men to tempt them. I come immediately : keep what thou hast, that no one take thy crown. The conquering one I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and thence he shall go out no more ; and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of His city, the new Jerusalem which cometh down from the sky and from My God, and My own name. Let the churches listen to The Revealer.

*(The last bright messenger leaps from His hand to Laodicea.)*

SEVENTH STAR-ANGEL : Thus saith The Amen, iii. 14 ff. the Witness, the Faithful and the True, the Beginning of the creation of God : I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot ; I would that thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art tepid, neither one nor the other, I will spit thee out of My mouth. Because thou boastest, I am rich and well-lined and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art forlorn and miserable and poor and blind and naked : I advise thee to purchase of Me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest indeed be rich ; and white garments that thou mayest cover thy naked self ; and balm to anoint thine eyes that

thou mayest see. I warn and discipline as many as I love : be ye therefore zealous and turn your minds about. Lo, I stand at the door and knock ; if any hear My voice and open the door, I will enter and sup with him and he with Me. To the conquering one : I will give to him to be enthroned with Me, as also I overcame and rose to My throne. The Revealer speaks to the listening ear of the churches.

JOHN (*watching the last star-angel fly from THE REVEALER'S hand ; muses*) : The dreams have gone. The Reality is here. We dreamt for centuries of " His brightness as the light ; and of the rays leaping from His hand ". He is here now ; and His revelation goes out to all the world.

Habbakuk  
iii. 4 (an  
ancient  
festal  
apoca-  
lypse)

iv. 2

(JOHN *draws himself up as if his intellectual and moral powers were newly strengthened. The scenery changes. It is now as if a first-century synagogue had been put in the sky. A simple building in one of whose walls is a vaulted throne and about it are seats for the presbyters. Seeing these things in the light of the sky, the Enthroned One seemed to be like gleaming jasper and sardius stones, whilst an emerald rainbow encircled the throne. And wheelwise from the throne were set four and twenty seats ; and upon them sitting the four and twenty presbyters in white garments crowned with gold. And from the throne issued the judgements the Semites expected on the Day of Tabernacles : lightnings and voices and*

iv. 3 ff.

*thunders. The menorah was burning before the throne, lit now by the seven spirits of God. And there was like a crystalline sea lapping the throne ; as would be in idea in any early synagogue, and in mosaic in later buildings. About the vault of the throne were the four winds : the lion ; the bull ; the man and the eagle, each with his apocalyptic wings and eyes. They have no rest day and night, saying, " Holy, holy, holy, the Lord ; the God ; the Almighty ; the I was, the I am and the I shall be ". And when the winds shall give glory and honour and gratitude to the Enthroned One, to the Immortal One ; then the four and twenty presbyters shall fall down before the Enthroned One and worship the Immortal One, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, " Worthy art thou, the Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power ; for thou didst create all things, and through thy will they were and were created ". And on the right v. 1 hand of the Enthroned One was a book written within and without, heavily sealed with seven seals. It was not on the throne as the Book of the Law would be in the synagogue.*

A GREAT VOICE : Who is worthy to open the v. 2 ff. book and to loose its seals ?

*(No one was found to open it. JOHN wept, as his fathers had done before him when the*

*apocalypse of the Day would not speak its meaning.)*

A PRESBYTER (*turning to JOHN*): Weep not. Behold, the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome; He will read the book and its seven seals.

v. 6

JOHN: Then I saw in the midst of the throne and of the winds and of the presbyters, a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and eyes, which are the spirits of God sent into all the world. And He came and took it from the right hand of the Enthroned One. And when He had taken the book, the winds and the presbyters fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls burning with incense, the prayers of the saints.

v. 9 f.

PRESBYTERS *and* WINDS (*singing a new song*): Worthy art Thou to take the book and to break its seals; for thou wast slain, and didst purchase to God in thy blood men from every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and madest them unto our God kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth.

v. 11

JOHN: I saw and heard the voice of many messengers in the vault of the throne and of the winds and presbyters; and their numbers were myriads.

v. 12

MESSENGERS, PRESBYTERS *and* WINDS (*sing*): Worthy is the slain Lamb to receive the power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and praise. (*The song passed into the whole cosmos which sang back this shireh:*) To the Enthroned One, to the Lamb: Praise and honour and glory and power unto the ages of the ages.

FOUR WINDS: The Amen.

*(The presbyters prostrated themselves and*



*worshipped. The seals of the book are about to be broken.)*

JOHN (*with anxiety ; as of a messenger with great responsibilities*): My brethren must understand Him. On all old Days of Tabernacles these words trampled through our minds, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished." On each of those Days the seals on the words were broken, and we saw the increasing preparations for judgement and war. My brethren will only understand Him as the broken seals of the book release the familiar servants of those preparations.

Zechariah  
xiv. 1-2  
(the apoca-  
lypse for  
the Day  
of Taber-  
nacles)

*(The first seal is broken.)* vi. 1-2

THE WIND (*with voice of thunder*): Come.

*(Its embodiment, according to the Tradition of apocalyptic, the white horse with crowned rider, came forth to conquest.)*

*(The second seal is broken.)* vi. 3-4

THE WIND: Come.

*(Its embodiment, the red horse with armed rider, came forth to take peace from the earth.)*

*(The third seal is broken.)* vi. 5-6

THE WIND: Come.

*(Its embodiment, the black horse whose rider holds a balance, came forth to weigh the crops of the fields.)*

*(The fourth seal is broken.)* vi. 7-8

THE WIND : Come.

*(Its embodiment, the ghostly horse whose rider is DEATH and follower is Place of the Dead came forth with authority to bring death to the world.)*

Zechariah  
xiv. 2

JOHN : The ancient words have wrought agony in our minds throughout the centuries when they went on, " And the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city ". Will this be done ? So now my brethren must begin to receive assurance that His disciples do and will live on. The ages-long agony must be healed.

vi. 9-11

*(The fifth seal is broken. Under the altar are the souls of them who died for their loyalty to the revelation, a white-robed throng.)*

SOULS OF DISCIPLES (*crying with a great voice*) : How long, O Master, the Holy and the True, dost Thou not judge and vindicate our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

Cf. Hebrews xi.  
40

JOHN : Rest awhile, heroic souls. Without us, ye cannot make up the immortal community.

vi. 12 ff.

*(The sixth seal is broken. The judgements of Jahweh upon Nature which invaded the minds of Palestinians, when they pondered the ancient festal apocalypses, such as Habbakuk iii. 5 ff., issued from the broken seal.)*

JOHN : The familiar agony in mind and nerve take on fresh power and solemnity as they turn us towards the War of The Revealer, the Lamb, against the devotees of Death.

*(A messenger bridles the four winds unleashed by the seals that they do not yet go on their errands of natural judgement ; until the ideal gathering from the Israelitish tribes, who will have listened to the immortal revelation of Jesus Christ, have had the name written on their foreheads.)* vii. 1-8

JOHN : I saw a great and numberless multitude, vii. 9  
out of every nation, standing before the throne and the Lamb, arrayed in white stoles and with palms in their hands.

THE MULTITUDE : Salvation to our God, the vii. 10  
Enthroned One and the Lamb.

JOHN : Then I saw the messengers standing vii. 11  
circlewise about the throne and the presbyters and the four winds ; these fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God.

THE WORSHIPPERS : The Amen : Praise and vii. 12  
glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might to our God unto the ages of the ages, the Amen.

A PRESBYTER (*turning to JOHN*) : Who are these vii. 13 ff  
in white robes ? Whence came they ?

JOHN : My mentor, thou knowest.

A PRESBYTER : These are they who, coming out of the great tribulation, have washed their stoles in the blood of the Lamb and whitened them. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple ; and the Enthroned One tents over them. No more shall they hunger nor thirst any more ; neither shall the sun tire them nor any heat. For the Lamb, the

Enthroned One, shall shepherd them and guide them unto fountains of the waters of life. And God shall dry all tears from their eyes.

AN INTERLUDE FOR EAR AND EYE

viii. 1

*(The seventh seal is broken. There follows a silence in the sky of about one-half an hour. This precision in hours always comes for the Semite before Jahweh is said to speak or act in a momentous way. The beats of the heart mark out that half an hour. They go on as for ever. JOHN is here a Semite once more. The interstices of the Day of Tabernacles, the passing moments and the re-enacted apocalypse of the Day streaming through the mind, make and fill them with the hopes which break as they rise and the pictured agents of Jahvistic judgement moving on their duties as they always did with the saecular coming again of the festival. For the Semite and the Tradition of Apocalyptic this Day was threaded through with the sound of the shofar, the trumpet-sound of ritual judgement. An old writer has called it, "The Day of the shofar". He goes on to call it, "the Day of wrath, of trouble and distress, of wasting away and desolation, of light and gloom, of clouds and black night, of the shofar and stretched nerves". That is what the Day is meaning for JOHN and those to whom he writes.*

Zephaniah  
i. 16

*Therefore both ear and eye combine to give these sensory invasions the substance which folk-pictures have: winged messengers; <sup>viii. 7 ff.</sup> stars falling; moonless night; perils among men; and the shofar weaving its pattern of judgement through the hours of that Day. With the growth of dramatic apprehension for ear and eye as the Day went its course, the images of active judgement became more awesome; and were <sup>ix. 3 ff.</sup> drawn from the oldest and creative source of such imagery, the plastic art of Subartu. This is what the folk-mind does in its moments of stress, no matter how far in time it may be from that source. JOHN, with those to whom he writes, is experiencing again the Day as it makes towards its last hour and disclosure. At the close of this Interlude for Semitic ear and eye, JOHN shows what was the aim of its manifestations. The judgements of the Day are <sup>ix. 20 f.</sup> religious ones. They discriminate between those who worship Jahweh and they who do not: an anticipation of the theme of the two Ways. The sensitive art of JOHN had to contrive this drama for the senses, if his book is to win its way with Semites. It too was meant to be the natural preface to the discriminating work of the revelation of his Lord. The Interlude ends.*

*JOHN is seen still on Patmos. The cardinal <sup>x. 1 ff.</sup> thing, which the precise timing ushered in,*

Cf. i. 13 ff.

*is about to be declared.* THE GREAT MESSENGER, *clad in clouds, with the rainbow over his head, and his face like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire, came down from the sky and strode the sea and the earth.*)

THE GREAT MESSENGER (*with lion's voice*): I swear by the Immortal One, the Creator of the sky and earth and sea and of all the things in them, that delay is over. When the seventh messenger blows his shofar, then will the revelation be declared; which The Revealer showed to His servants, its messengers.

A VOICE: John, go and take the little book which is in the hand of the Great Messenger.

(JOHN *goes to* THE GREAT MESSENGER *and asks that it be given to him.*)

xi. 1 ff.

THE GREAT MESSENGER: Take it and eat it up. . . . For thou must repeat its message to many peoples and nations and languages and kings. (*He gives a reed-like rod to JOHN.*) Stand up, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshippers in it. Measure not its court. That belongs to the pagans, and they trample upon the holy city forty and two months. And messengers of Mine clad in sackcloth shall speak My message. They are My olive-trees; My menorah. No one may hurt them. They are My Elijahs; My Sons of the Man, who rule over the 'Centre' of the cosmos and its waters. Yet shall the beast called Death, the embodiment of ancient cults, come up from the Semitic place of the dead and make war with them and kill them. They shall lie in death as long as I

xi. 8

did when I was crucified. Afterwards I will give them life and they shall stand upon their feet. And they which killed them shall see them.

*(The messengers are gathered into the cloud xi. 12 about THE GREAT MESSENGER. Apocalyptic judgement follows upon the city. The tempo of John's message becomes xi. 14 quicker. The seventh messenger sounds the shofar. The cardinal word is to be spoken.)*

VOICES IN THE SKY : The kingdom of the world xi. 15 is now the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ ; and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages.

THE PRESBYTERS (*prostrated themselves from their xi. 17 f. seats before God and worshipped*) : We give Thee thanks, O Lord, the God, the Almighty, the I am, the I was, because thou hast assumed thine ineffable power and dost reign. The peoples raged, Thy judgement showed itself at once. The dead were judged, Thy servants and messengers were rewarded as were thy saints and worshippers both small and great ; and Thou destroyedst the destroyers of the earth.

## EPISODE II

*The door of the synagogue in the sky is opened, and xi. 19 the ark of the Lord is seen. From the Torah issue apocalyptic lightnings and voices and thunders, an earthquake and heavy hail. JOHN is seen as at the beginning of the Day, but now with greater increase of intellectual and moral energy. In the background, and at the foot of*

*the hills which uphold the cosmic tent, is the figure of Moses, the hero of the Semitic saga of the Son of the Man.*

- JOHN (*is pondering and writing as if turning over in his mind, as pages are turned, the sources of the saga*): When Moses was born the planets spoke of him. Israel's star was very bright in the sky. (*He writes.*) And a great sign was seen in the sky; a woman robed with the sun, crowned with twelve stars, and the moon beneath her feet. And she was with child, and cried out in her agony to be delivered. . . . (*Ponders.*) Death the Dragon was also in the sky. (JOHN *writes.*) And another sign was seen in the sky; lo, a dragon great and red, having seven-crowned heads and ten horns; and his tail swept a third of the stars from the sky and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman about to bear her child that when he was born he might devour him. . . . (*Reflects again.*) It was said of her child that he would be the Master of mankind. (*Writes.*) And she was delivered of a son, the *Man*, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. (*Stops writing once more.*) Death the Dragon was not allowed to harm him. For Jahweh suckled him with honey from the rock and fatness from the flinty rock. That's in the 'Song of Moses'. I hear the first strains of the new song. (*Writes.*) And her child was caught up to God and unto His throne. . . . (*Again ponders.*) Both of them were hidden from the Dragon. That too is in the 'Song of Moses': in the waste howling wilderness, Jahweh com-
- xii. 1-2
- xii. 3-4
- xii. 5 a, b
- Cf. Deut. xxxii. 13
- xii. 5 c
- Cf. Deut. xxxii. 10



passed him about ; He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. (*Writes.*) And the woman <sup>xii. 6</sup> fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared by God and there she was nourished. . . . (*Ponders more deeply.*) Death the Dragon was in the sky. So the old traditions of my people concerning Moses said. The Jahvistic hosts cast him out. Moses was to live on. (*Writes.*) And war was in the sky, Michael and his host fought with the Dragon. He and his host made war ; failed, and the sky was rid of them. And the great Dragon was flung to the earth. . . . (*JOHN lifts his pen, and as if saying the words he is writing.*) He whom the <sup>xii. 9 b</sup> ages call down to this day — the old Serpent, the Devil, the Satan, the Deceiver of the world of men.

A GREAT VOICE IN THE SKY (*knowing the saga and also the energy of the revelation of Jesus Christ*) : Now is the salvation and the power and the kingdom <sup>xii. 10-12</sup> of our God and the regnancy of His Christ ; for the unsleeping opposer of our brethren is cast down. And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their messages ; and they cherished their messengership more than their lives. Therefore, O sky, be glad and all the dwellers in its tent. Woe is to the earth and sea ; for wrathful Death is flung upon you, and he knows that he has but a little while.

JOHN (*turning from the triumph again to the rustling pages of the saga*) : How goes on the ' Song of Moses ' ? Jahweh spread abroad his wings ; he <sup>Deut. xxxii. 11</sup> took them, he bare them on his pinions. (*Writes.*) <sup>xii. 13-14</sup> And when the dragon realised that he was cast

down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the *Man*. And two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman that she might fly into the wilderness and be nourished out of the sight of the Serpent. . . . (JOHN *raises his head questioningly*.) The saga said that Moses was to meet his death through water ; thus Death would deal with his mother. (Writes.) And the Serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water like a river, that she might be borne away by its spate. And the earth helped the woman ; she opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the Dragon tossed from his mouth. . . . (JOHN *half-rises from his seat, as if what he could hear was like exquisite music*.) The old is passing into the new song. (He sits again and writes.) And the Dragon was angered with the woman, and went away to war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and hold the revelation of Jesus.

xii 15-16

xii. 17

xiii. 1 ff.

(Meanwhile DEATH took his stand on the sand of a sea. In this scene JOHN is a spectator. It goes on in silence. The apocalyptical 'stage' has extended itself from Patmos to Jerusalem. The cosmic background in the island is becoming the actual cosmic 'Centre' which is that city. The Dragon, who is DEATH, expelled from the sky, is soundlessly calling up his other selves from the sea and the place of the dead. Overcome in the sky, DEATH gathers his forces for the War of the Ways. The Dragon, then, is on the

*shore of a sea which is on the map of Apocalyptic: a sea which can keep company with the place of the dead. JOHN sees him there; and awaits the rise of his first alter ego from the waters in the abyss beneath the 'Centre' of the Semitic cosmos. The creature is crowned not with kings' crowns, but with the names of Jahweh used blasphemously. His animal-form is Sub-arean: that is, it comes from the very sources of apocalyptical imagery. His notes of cult, as one of his heads stricken as by a ritual-knife, go back to cults as old as that source, and from the same homeland. JOHN watched the ancient world worshipping DEATH and his surrogate from the sea in the abyss. JOHN's eyes do not turn from these to glance back at Rome with its contemporary worship of the emperor. They looked right on, and through contemporary cults in Palestine, to the founding of the cosmos. Such was the range of sight which the revelation of Jesus gave to its messengers. The Lord Jesus, like His revelation, was and is for ever. DEATH, with his many names, is the embodied opposition of cults to Him from the beginning of the physical world. That is why JOHN sees men's names inscribed, from that time onwards, in the Book of the Revealer of Life. Then is seen the rise of Death's second alter ego from the place of the dead. JOHN sees*

xiii. 5 ff.

xiii. 8; cf.  
e.g. Hebrews xii 1

xiii. 18

him also from the Semitic and Christian apocalyptical angle of vision. That is in just the same way as he saw the beast from the waters of the abyss. As a messenger of the revelation of Jesus, he is bent upon seeing DEATH driven from the whole of the universe. He could have no interest in the triviality of a later scribe of his book who, introducing the number 666 into the text, tried to thwart the Christian message and JOHN by inhibiting the reference of the book to some cryptically designated person of his own time. JOHN is still looking on to the foundation of the cosmos, and through the Palestine he carried in heart and mind. The one feature of this variant in form of DEATH he found worth recording is that he had horns like a lamb. That is a clear indication of his opposition, as the embodiment of the place of the dead — those dread hollows in the earth which are said to be near to the 'Centre' of the cosmos — to the Lord of Life, the Lamb.

There is one other director of JOHN's sight which must be recognised if we would stand with him and see. That is the Day. On the eve of the Day of Tabernacles the sovereignty of the place of the dead is manifested in its ritual. And into the joy of the grape-harvest flowed the dark and menacing waters of the abyss, as the proper Psalms for the Day can tell us.

*From the preparations on the earth for the War by the Way of Death, JOHN turned his eyes to the preparations in the sky by the Way of Life.)*

JOHN : I saw, and lo, the Lamb stood on the xiv. 1 ff ' Centre ' in the sky, and with Him the ideal gathering of believers in His revelation. I heard the sound of many waters, a deep diapason, and yet like the sound of unearthly harps, making the music of the new song. None could learn it save the disciples. These are they who have not defiled themselves with *the Woman*, the harlot city. They are His virgins. For they follow the Lamb wherever He leads. No lie is in their mouths ; they are blameless of the cult worship of Death.

*(A messenger flew in the lower sky having the xiv. 6 ff. eternal message to proclaim to the whole world.)*

THE MESSENGER : Fear God, and give glory to Him ; for the hour of His judgement is come. And worship Him that made the sky and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

A SECOND MESSENGER (*following the first*) : Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great city, which hath caused all nations to drink of the fierce wine of her fornication.

A THIRD MESSENGER (*follows the others, crying aloud*) : If any worshippeth Death, and receiveth his mark on forehead or hand, he also shall drink of the wine of God's judgement, mingled crudely in the cup of His anger. He shall be tormented in the fire and brimstone of the place of the dead. Their

smoke of torment riseth unto the ages of the ages. They have no rest day and night ; they who worship Death, and receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints, the loyalists to the command of God and the faith of Jesus.

A VOICE IN THE SKY : Write : Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Yes, saith His Spirit ; from henceforth they may rest from their unrest. They do live on.

v. 14 JOHN : I saw, and lo, a white cloud ; on the cloud was sitting the Son of the Man. A golden crown was upon His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

v. 15-16 ANOTHER MESSENGER (*flying from the synagogue in the sky and crying to the Bearer of the sickle*) : Send forth Thy sickle, and reap ; for the hour to reap is come ; and the harvest of the earth is heavy. And the Son of the Man cast His sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped. For the Day of harvest was now.

v. 17 ff. (*A second messenger came out from the synagogue in the sky, bearing a sharp sickle like to his Lord. And a third bearing ritual fire ; he had also a great voice.*)

THE THIRD MESSENGER (*to the bearer of His sickle*) : Send forth Thy sharp sickle, and cut the clusters of grapes on the vine of the earth. For her grapes are richly ripe.

(*The bearer of His sickle cast it upon the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth ; and cast them into the great winepress of the judgement of God.*)

*And the winepress was trodden outside the harlot city ; and the wine rose like a wide flood as high as the bridles of horses.)*

JOHN : I saw the preparation of the last apoca- <sup>xv. 1-4</sup>  
lyptical accompaniments of the judgement of God. Standing upon the sea, which comes to the throne of the synagogue in the sky, a sea like glass mingled with fire, were they who had come victorious from Death and his worship holding the harps of God. And they sing the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb.

THE SINGERS : Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, the God, the Almighty : righteous and true are Thy ways, O King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name ? For Thou alone art the Holy One ; unto Thee shall all the nations come and worship. Thine epiphany hath shown the truth of Thee.

### EPISODE III

*The Tent of the sky is now the Synagogue. But the <sup>xv. 5-8</sup>  
messengers of the judgements are still of the apocalyptical order. The Christian messenger which is JOHN is here subject to the Semite in him that he might get the message into Semitic minds. It is the hour before the War. An apocalyptical vanguard engages the hosts of DEATH upon the earth, in the waters, and in the <sup>xvi. 2-4,</sup>  
firmament. The greater ritual features acknow- <sup>8-9</sup>  
ledge the rightness of the judgements.*

THE SEMITIC SPIRIT WHO DWELLS IN THE WATERS : Thou art righteous, the I am and the I was, the Holy One, because Thou didst thus judge : for they spilt the blood of the saints and the prophets. Now are they given blood to drink worthily.

THE SEMITIC ALTAR (*speaks*) : Yea, O Lord, the God, the Almighty, true and right are Thy judgements.

JOHN sees this vanguard attack the high places of the cult of DEATH. Even the area of the Euphrates in which Israel had found those cult ideas and plastic images for the shaping of the main things of her Apocalyptic. These attacks had finally massed the hosts of DEATH unto the war of the Day of Tabernacles, which is now the Day of God, the Almighty.

And they congregated to the War of the Ways.

THE THRONE IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE SKY (*said with a loud voice*) : It is done.

(*There follow the apocalyptic judgements : lightnings ; voices ; thunders ; and the earthquake, such as accompany the Semitic understanding of the apocalypse for the Day of Tabernacles.*)

The heralds of the judgements in the War take JOHN that he may see things from their angles of vision. The War is in active array. The heralds declare the overthrow of the City in which the War will be waged.

THE FIRST HERALD : Look from this point, I



will show thee the judgement of the great Harlot set over many waters ; with whom the kings of the earth did fornication and the dwellers of the earth were besotted with the wine of her fornication.

JOHN : I went with him in the Spirit of the xvii. 3 ff. revelation, and saw a Woman in purple seated upon Death the beast, which had names full of blasphemy on heads and horns. The Woman was bedecked with jewels, holding a golden cup full of abominable things of her fornications. Upon her forehead was written her name which is being disclosed : *Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Earth's Abominations*. And I saw the Woman drunken with the blood of the saints and of the messengers of Jesus. And I began to wonder.

THE FIRST HERALD : Why do you wonder con- xvii. 7 ff. cerning her name ? She sits upon the waters of the earth ; she is near the wilderness ; she is close to the abyss and the place of the dead, whence comes Death himself ; and she is a city upon the seven mountains. She is the great city which hath sovereignty over the kings of the earth.

JOHN : And I heard again the ancient words for the Day of Tabernacles : I will gather all nations cf. Zechariah xiv. 2 against Jerusalem to battle.

(JOHN sees another herald coming from the xviii. 1 sky whose brightness lightened the earth.)

THE SECOND HERALD : Fallen, fallen is Babylon xviii. 2 ff. the great ; she is become a dwelling-place of Death's devotees, and a prison of his followers and of all who prey upon them. Through the wine of her fornication are the peoples debased ; the kings of the earth

are the slaves of her wiles, and the merchants of the earth are bloated with the gains of her harlotry.

iii. 4 ff.

(JOHN hears a third herald calling out the disciples of THE REVEALER from the doomed city. And the judgement upon her unfolds itself before his mind in the rich and wanton colours of a Phoenician panorama : the cult doings and luxury of Tyrian life. He is obedient to the Tradition of Apocalyptic in causing Jerusalem to fall as if she were the renaissance of Phoenician conditions. He watches another herald take a huge millstone and cast it into the waters of the abyss.)

iii. 21 ff.

THE THIRD HERALD (as he casts the stone with a tremendous result) : Thus falls Babylon the great city, and no trace of her be found. The voice of plucked strings or blown flutes and shofars shall be heard no more in thee ; no artist shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound of the mill-wheel shall cease. No lamp in any house shall ever shine ; nor bridal joy be heard again. Once thy merchants ruled the markets of the world, so great was the power of thy black arts. But now in them is found only the blood of His messengers and disciples and innocents.

i. 1-3

(The cries of the heralds of the judgements are answered by the chanting in the sky of the followers of the revelation of Jesus.)

THE MULTITUDE IN THE SKY : Hallelujah : The salvation and the glory and the power of our God. True and righteous are His judgements. For He hath sentenced the great Harlot which corrupted the

earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. . . . Hallelujah: the smoke of her ruins riseth unto the ages of the ages.

THE PRESBYTERS AND THE FOUR WINDS (*bowing* xix. 4 *down and worshipping the Enthroned God*): The Amen: Hallelujah.

THE THRONE (*given a voice*): Render praise to xix. 5 our God all ye His servants, both great and small, who are His worshippers.

THE MULTITUDE IN THE SKY (*their choiring* xix. 6 ff *sounds like the mingling of majestic waters and storms*): Hallelujah: the Lord, the God, our Almighty One reigneth. Let us make joy and gladness, and give the glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His bride is robed. It was given to her to array herself in white linen, shining and spotless: the fine linen of loyal acts of discipleship.

ONE OF THE MESSENGERS IN THE MULTITUDE xix. 9-10 (*speaks to JOHN*): Write: Blessed are they which are called to the bridal feast of the Lamb. All that you have heard are God's true oracles.

(*JOHN falls at his feet as if to worship him.*)

ONE OF THE MESSENGERS IN THE MULTITUDE: Do not so; I am a fellow-servant with thee and thy brethren who are loyal to the revelation of Jesus. Let us worship God; for the revelation of Jesus is the Spirit of our message.

(*Then the War of the Ways was set. A white* xix. 11 ff. *horse leapt from the sky and upon him sat the Faithful and the True One; who judgeth and warreth in righteousness. His*

*eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many crowns, having a name written on them which no one but himself beareth. He is arrayed in a robe dipped in blood; and his name is the Word of God. The armies in the sky followed him upon white horses clad in fine linen, shining and spotless. From his mouth flasheth out a keen sword with which to subdue the peoples. He shall shepherd them with an iron crook. And he treadeth the grapes of the unyielding judgement of God, the Almighty. Upon his robe and thigh is written another name: King of kings and Lord of lords.*

ix. 17-18

*As the Word passed to the War of the Ways, JOHN heard a great voice speaking as from the heart of the sun.*

THE VOICE (*speaking to the birds flying in the firmament*): Flock together unto the great table of God's judgement. Ye may eat of the flesh of kings and military leaders; of vaunted power and of all Death's devotees.

ix. 19-21

JOHN: Then I saw Death, his vassal kings and their armies, marshalled to make war with the Rider of the white horse and his soldiers. Death was beaten. He and his chief cult ministrant were taken and cast into the lake of fire which burneth in the place of the dead. And his armies were slain by the sword of the revelation of the Rider on the white horse. And the birds ate of their flesh. The Way of Death had been overthrown by the Way of Life.

JOHN (*murmuring the words of the apocalypse of* cf. Zechariah xiv. 3 *the Day as he watches the War of the Ways*): Then shall the Lord go forth and make battle against those nations which assault Jerusalem. The ancient dream! The Revealer now is here.

[*The modern onlooker at the greatest of all wars must experience with JOHN two sublime assurances. First, the overthrow of Jewish Apocalyptic is accomplished by the early Christian most sensitive and true belief in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Second, this overthrow meant the conquest of Death, the embodiment of the inescapable Place of the Dead, which is the dreaded feature in those folk-ideas of the cosmos whence Jewish Apocalyptic had sprung.*]

(*A messenger descended from the sky having* xx. 1-3 *the key of the Abyss and a great chain in his hand. He gripped the Dragon, the old Serpent, the later Devil and Satan — DEATH in his main cult variants through the ages — and bound him for a thousand years. He cast him into his own place, the abyss of the place of the dead; locked and sealed it upon him that he should no more deceive the nations.*)

JOHN (*musings*): A thousand years! That is one day; a part of this Day in the sensations and thoughts of my forebears, as they waited to learn if the Day meant life or the place of the dead to them. Just so must the suspense be in this new Day, for my countrymen who are to be won for the Lord of

Life, between His speaking of the revelation and Death's annihilation.

x 4 ff.

*(Meanwhile the disciples of the Revealer, in all the ages before the time of His historic revelation, who had suffered or in any way had turned from the worship of DEATH were judged alive in that interim of suspense : the thousand years of apocalyptical time. This was called the first resurrection. These disciples share no part in the second resurrection ; but are alive servants of God and the Christ. The conquest of Death in the Past is at an end.*

x. 7 ff.

*For the conquest of DEATH in the Present and Future, the Dragon or Satan is loosed from his prison for a little while. He is shown at his work of deception, his active warfare against the disciples of THE REVEALER in the first century. He and his forces climbed the ' Centre ' of the world, and circled about the dwellings of the saints, and the beloved city which is Jerusalem. Fire from the sky devoured them ; and DEATH is cast into his own lake of fire. The conquest of the revelation of Jesus in the Present necessitated the repetition of the War which JOHN had already seen.)*

x. 9

: 11 ff.

JOHN : I saw a throne, great and white, and earth and sky fled before the face of the Enthroned One, and there was no place found for them. I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books of judgement were opened.

On the Day of Tabernacles men and Nature were judged ; on the eve of the Day the throne was set for the judgement of the living and the dead. Therefore the waters gave up their dead ; and Death and the place of the dead released their dead — and every man was judged according to his works. Death and the place of the dead were cast into their own lake of fire. And if any followed not The Revealer, he was cast into the place of the dead. This is the second or contemporary judgement unto death.

#### EPISODE IV

*The sky and the earth are cleansed of DEATH. They <sup>xxi. 1</sup> are new ; because THE REVEALER has caused to pass away the apocalyptical menaces in sky and earth and waters.*

JOHN : I saw the holy city Jerusalem descending <sup>xxi. 2</sup> new from the sky. In her adornments, she seemed like a bride awaiting her husband.

THE THRONE (*speaking as with a great voice*) : <sup>xxi. 3-4</sup> Lo, the Tent of God is with men, and He shall tent with them, and they shall be His peoples. The Very God shall be with them. He shall dry every tear from their eyes, and Death shall be no more. Mourning nor lamenting nor pain shall be any more. For the old things are passed away.

THE ENTHRONED REVEALER : Lo, I make all <sup>xxi. 5 a-8</sup> things new. My revelation is faithful and true. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to the thirsty one freely from

the fountain of the water of life. The overcoming one shall inherit these things. I will be his God and he shall be My son. But to the cowardly, the unbelieving and the cult devotees : to the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters and all liars is a part in the lake of the place of the dead. This is the second death.

ci. 5 b      JOHN (*writing with deep spiritual pleasure*) : As I write I hear the silencing of the sighs and the ceasing of the tears which have filled this Day ; because of the dreams and longings of my people through the ages for a Jerusalem new with devotion to Jahweh. My Lord has made all these old things new.

f.  
Ezechiah  
v. 6 ff.

ci. 9      A MESSENGER OF JUDGEMENT (*speaking to JOHN*) : Come with me, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

ci. 10 ff.      JOHN : I went with him in the Spirit of The Revealer to a mountain near the city, and I was shown the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of the sky from God with His glory upon her. Her tower of light was like to a most precious stone, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal : having a great and high wall and twelve gates. And at the gates twelve guardians. They are inscribed with names, even the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Three gates are on the east ; and on the north and south and west are three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and upon them are the names of the twelve disciples of the Lamb. And the messenger who spoke to me had a golden measuring reed, with which to measure



the city, her gates and her wall. And the city is square in form ; its length being the same as its breadth. He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand stadii : the length and the breadth and the height of her being equal. And he measured her wall, a hundred and forty and four cubits ; the measure of the man who is the messenger. And the material of her wall was jasper. The city shone like gold or sacred glass. The foundations of the city's wall were encrusted with gems. The first foundation was jasper ; the second, sapphire ; the third, chalcedony ; the fourth, emerald ; the fifth, sardonyx ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, chrysolite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, topaz ; the tenth, chrysoprasos ; the eleventh, hyacinth ; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; each of the gates was one great pearl. The street of the city was gold like light-lit glass. And I saw no temple in her. For the Lord, the God, the Almighty, the Lamb is her temple. And the city needeth not the sun, nor the moon, to illuminate her. For the glory of God lighteneth her, since the Lamb is her lamp. The peoples walk about by her light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into her. Her gates are never closed ; for day and night are no more there. Without cease, the glory and honour of the nations are borne into her. And there shall not enter into her any ritual thing, act or falsity of the devotee ; but they alone whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

*Cf.*  
Zechariah  
Apoca-  
lypse,  
xiv. 6-7

The messenger showed me the river of the water of life, like gleaming crystal, pouring out from the

throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of her street, and on this and that side of the river is a tree of life bearing twelve yields of fruit, each month its own crop ; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the peoples. And no more shall there be any curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in her : and His servants shall do holy service to Him ; they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There night shall be no more ; neither need of lamplight nor moonlight. For the Lord, the God, is light for them, and they are as kings unto the ages of the ages.

z.  
Zachariah  
v. 11

iii. 16 a-  
'a, c THE REVEALER : I have sent my messenger to you to witness these things for the churches.

THE REVEALER *and* THE BRIDE : Come : let the thirsty one come ; let the willing one take freely of the water of life.

iii. 17 b All true disciples of The Revealer (say) : Come.

iii. 16 b (*The Day is done. There is no night. For the Bright and Morning Star shines immortally over the world.*)

[It should be said that the décors for Episode I is based upon a water-colour drawing of John on Patmos contained in R. Caraccioli de Licio, *Quadragesimale de Poenitentia* (Basel, 1475). It is a drawing contemporary with the book, and both are in the Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library. An uncoloured copy of the drawing is given by Symington, *The Brotherton Library: A Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*, 1931, 54. The subject of the pictures of the writers of New Testament books in early manuscripts, etc., their rise and development, is very far from being exhausted of interest for students of Early Christian art and ideas.]

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